THE HISTORY OF HAYY IBN YAQZAN

by

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INTRODUCTION

THIS little philosophical romance, one of the most interesting works of the Middle Ages, was written in Muhammadan Spain towards the end of the twelfth century.

Since the early days of Muslim conquest, when the Arabs forced their way along North Africa and in 711 crossed into Andalusia, those regions had seen the rise and fall of many Muslim states, varying in territorial extent and not of uniform doctrinal complexion. At the period we now speak of the puritanic Berber dynasty of Almohads dominates the whole stage, and Abu Ya'qub Yusuf, claiming the proud title Commander of the Faithful, second of his line, rules from his capital, the City of Morocco, over all North Africa, from the Atlantic shore to the borders of Egypt, as well as a large tract of Southern Spain. This empire he inherited from his father, 'Abd al-Mu'min, who had conquered it in his own lifetime in a series of brilliant campaigns lasting about thirty years, and most of it had been torn from the grasp of another great Berber house, the Almoravids. Except in the Balearic Islands the power of the

Almoravids was now extinct. Their sultans had always formally recognised the supremacy of the ruling Caliph at Baghdad. Abu Ya'qub, however, like all his house, brooked no dictation from the Eastern Caliphate—either temporal or spiritual. He was lord of the Muslim West, and the religious doctrine on which his empire rested was that laid down by his spiritual ancestor and founder of the Almohad sect, the Berber Mahdi Ibn Tumart, one of the many Mahdis or Rightly Guided Ones of Islamic history, divinely sent to fill the earth with justice, who died in 1130 (or 1128) and whose grave at Tinmal in the Atlas mountains was now a holy place.

Briefly, this reformed doctrine demanded two things: in belief, a purely spiritual conception of Allah; in conduct, a literal acceptance of Koranic teaching. In the first place every anthropomorphic element must be swept out of religion; secondly, Muhammadan law must be based on nothing but the actual statements of the Koran and the words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad as transmitted by authentic Tradition. " Reasoning," said the Mahdi, " can have no place in the divine Law." The name of the sect was *al-Muwahhidun,* i.e. *the Unitarians,* or in its Spanish form, *Almohades.* Any Muslims who rejected its puritan principles were destined

for hell-fire and must be helped thither at every opportunity by the swords of the faithful; indeed, in the eyes of the Almohads, the spiritual condition of such heretics was just as hopeless as that of the Christians, who had by this time succeeded, to the vexation of Islam, in restoring their sway over much the larger part of the Spanish peninsula. The first three centuries of Muslim rule in Spain had been distinguished on the whole by a high level of culture and religious tolerance unparalleled anywhere in contemporary Christendom. But these later invasions from Africa, first by the Almoravids and then by the Almohads, established a régime of Berber fanaticism, the brunt of which fell cruelly on the non-Muslim inhabitants and compelled many of them to flee for refuge into Northern Spain and Provence.

In view of this ruthless theology which the Caliph publicly enforced, it is somewhat of a surprise to discover that his private delight was philosophical speculation and the society of thinkers far removed from orthodoxy. But of this we have abundant evidence. In his scheme of life speculation and practical politics appear to have dwelt severely separate. It was one thing to preside, as he often did, over the discussions of the intelligentsia in Marrakush and Seville, but quite another to discharge his office as Com-

mander of the Believers. For preserving the spiritual health of the masses and the empire's welfare, no specific, in his judgment, could equal the strict letter of the Koran and the Almohad brand of dogma. Let his faithful people therefore concentrate on their divinely appointed duties —performing their five daily prayers and the other rites of the faith, harassing at intervals "the accursed Adhfunsh," i.e. King Alphonso, whose growing power menaced the security of the Muslims in Spain, planning horrid surprises for the Christian fleet when it issued from Lisbon, taming the lawless tribes of the African desert. The "thinking man," on the other hand, belonged to a select and privileged order. Between him and the great masses lay an intellectual gulf which he must never attempt to cross, for he would only let anarchy loose by tampering with their simple faith and discipline. In the seclusion of his patron's library he was welcome to indulge his philosophic doubt, but on no account from the house-top.

This beautiful scheme of obscurantism appears to have been adopted by the Almohad sovereigns generally, and gladly accepted by the enlightened few who lived under their rule.

The dominion of the Almohads was comparatively brief. A crushing military disaster

awaited them at the hands of the Christians at Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212, and even more destructive were the dissensions which broke out within the dynasty itself and soon completed the ruin of this empire which had sprung into being with such amazing rapidity. After a century and a half its last spark was extinguished with the fall of the City of Morocco in 1269. Its importance to civilisation in a material sense may have been negligible, but among its leading figures the Caliph Abu Ya'qub, not to mention one or two others of his line, is worthy of remembrance for his patronage of philosophy. It was by his desire and partly for his enlightenment that Ibn Rushd (Averroes), the greatest Arab thinker of Spain, composed his famous commentaries on Aristotle, which in their Latin form soon seized the intellectual world of Medieval Europe; and this curious tale of Hayy Ibn Yaqzan would probably have never seen the light had its author not been the special protégé of this same prince.

The historical records that survive tell us surprisingly little about Ibn Tufail's life. His full name was Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Malik Ibn Tufail al-Qaisi, the last word indicating that his family claimed descent from the celebrated Arabian tribe of Qais. The medieval scholars of Europe, with unusual

accuracy in such matters, call him Abubacer. He was born at Wadi Ash, the modern Guadix, about forty miles N.E. of Granada, probably between 1100 and 1110 A.D. Although Arabic records are silent about his early life and studies, it is not unlikely that he absorbed the science and philosophy of his day at Cordova and Seville, the two intellectual headquarters of Muhammadan Spain. He is said to have practised medicine at Granada and to have been governor of that province, but precisely when in his career we are not told. In 1154, when the Caliph 'Abd al-Mu'min was distributing imperial appointments among the members of his family, the governorship of Granada, Malaga, Algeciras, Ceuta and Tangier fell to his son, the Sayyid Abu Sa'id, and Ibn Tufail joined him as secretary. From that point nothing is known of his fortunes until he appears at the Court of the Caliph Abu Ya'qub, elevated to the high offices of Wazir and chief royal physician, a combination of functions not unusual in Muhammadan states. It is doubtful whether this title of Wazir means that he was actually prime minister, but there is no question that he served as one of the Caliph's chief advisers. His position at court is best described in these words of 'Abd al-Wahid,[1]

[1] Al-Mu'jib. Ed. Dozy, pp. 172, 174, 175. Tr. Fagnan, pp. 207-210.

the only historian who allows us any intimate glimpses of the situation:

"Ceaselessly he [the Caliph] collected books from all parts of Andalusia and the Maghrib [i.e. North Africa west of Egypt], and so diligently sought out learned men, especially those concerned with speculative science, that he had more of them in his circle than any previous sovereign of the West. Among the versatile savants who frequented his company was the Muslim philosopher, Abu Bakr Muhammad Ibn Tufail, a master in every branch of philosophy. . . . One of his treatises on natural science is called *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*, and is designed to explain the origin of the human species.[1] Although of small compass it is a highly instructive work. . . . He was so beloved by the Commander of the Faithful that he used to stay successive days and nights with him without leaving the palace. . . . He introduced learned men from every quarter, and directed towards them the attention, favour and praise of his sovereign. It was he who brought to his notice Abu al-Walid Ibn Rushd (Averroes), who from that moment became known and appreciated. His disciple, the lawyer and professor, Abu Bakr Bundud ibn Yahya of Cordova, told

[1] It would appear that 'Abd al-Wahid had looked only at the first few pages of the book.

me he had often heard Abu al-Walid relate the following story: 'When I was presented to the Commander of the Faithful, Abu Ya'qub, I found him alone with Ibn Tufail. The latter proceeded to recommend me to him, telling him of my house and my ancestors and generously adding words of praise which I did not merit. After some questions as to my name, my father's name and my lineage, the Commander of the Faithful abruptly asked me: "What is their view (meaning that of the philosophers) about the heavens; are they eternal or created in time?" Seized with confusion and fear, I tried to make an excuse and to deny that I had any dealings with philosophy, not knowing that Ibn Tufail had conspired with him to test me in this way. The Commander of the Faithful noticed my embarrassment and turning to Ibn Tufail began discussing with him the question he had put to me. He recalled what Aristotle, Plato and all the philosophers had said on the point, and stated also the arguments brought against them by the Muslims, displaying such copious knowledge as I should not have expected even from an expert. So completely did he put me at ease that I entered the discussion, and everything I said he followed intelligently. After my departure I was presented, at his command, with a gift of money, a magnificent robe of honour and a horse.'"

In 1182, probably owing to his advanced age, Ibn Tufail resigned his post of royal physician and was succeeded therein by his younger philosopher-friend, Averroes, but he still retained his position as counsellor to the Caliph. Peace and prosperity now reigned in Africa, the state coffers were well filled, and the Caliph, feeling himself in a position to deal a damaging blow at the Christian power in Spain, ordered preparations for an offensive on an immense scale. His programme was to capture Santarem, the key position in Portugal; to annex the whole of that region as far as the Douro, thence to advance on Toledo and teach a lesson to the King of Castile, Alphonso VIII, whose forces for some time past had discomfited the Muslims in minor encounters. From all quarters of the Almohad empire troops were collected and formed into the most powerful Muslim army that had ever appeared on the Peninsula, and a great fleet was fitted out for a simultaneous assault on Lisbon. Nothing, however, worked out according to plan. The defenders of Santarem offered a heroic resistance until powerful Christian reinforcements arrived, part of them led by the Archbishop of Santiago de Compostella, which inflicted severe losses on the invaders. Lisbon proved impregnable to the Muhammadan fleet. No permanent conquests could be achieved, and

the campaign transformed itself into a wild marauding expedition in the course of which all the countryside of Estremadura was swept by fire and sword. This venture proved fatal to the Caliph. According to the most reliable account he was wounded at the siege of Santarem and died on his litter a month afterwards, during the journey home to Seville, on the 28th July, 1184. His body was taken to Africa and interred in the Almohad burial-place at Tinmal, where his father, 'Abd al-Mu'min, and Ibn Tumart, the founder of the sect, had already been laid.

He was succeeded by his son, Abu Yusuf al-Mansur, an energetic ruler who inherited much of his father's zest for philosophic study and encouraged it among the cultured few, but who at the same time imposed on the general public the discipline of the state doctrine, " back to the sources of the faith," with greater severity than either of his predecessors. In Spain and Africa he had bonfires made of the leading books of Muhammadan law, on the pious pretext that they consisted largely of fallible human " reasoning " about the divine ordinances. His real object was to prevent the spread of independent thought among the lower orders; their business was not to think but to believe and obey; and as for law, they could find all they needed of that in the revealed word of God and the recorded

practice of his Prophet. The aged Ibn Tufail continued his diplomatic duties at the court of the new Caliph, enjoying the same favour from him as from his father. By this time our philosopher must have been about eighty years of age. He died in the following year, 1185, at the capital, the City of Morocco, and was buried there with great ceremony, the Caliph himself attending his obsequies.

In addition to the affairs of state, medicine, astronomy, philosophy and poetry made up the sum of his activities; but he wrote very little, and all that now survives is a few fragments of verse and this allegory of Hayy ibn Yaqzan, which is probably his one and only philosophical work.

It is a tale of two islands. One is uninhabited by man, and on it a child appears, either spontaneously generated or floated thither in a box. The child is Hayy ibn Yaqzan, "Alive son of Awake." He is suckled by a gazelle, and on the death of this foster-mother is left, Crusoe-like, to his own resources. His innate intelligence, feeble at first, develops by degrees, until it enables him to dominate his brute companions. He reaches manhood, and by ceaseless observation and reflection gradually acquires a knowledge of the physical universe. Thence he advances into the realm of metaphysics and

proves for himself the existence of an all-powerful Creator. Practising ascetic discipline of mind and body he seeks for union with this One Eternal Spirit. At last he comes to the state of ecstasy, and overleaping the final metaphysical barrier, his intellect merges with the Active Intellect and he apprehends those things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard. Thus at the end of seven times seven years, without prophet or revelation, he achieves the utmost fullness of knowledge and ineffable felicity in mystical union with his Lord. At this stage, while he is yet unaware of the existence of any other country or of the human race, he is amazed one day to discover, walking on his island, a creature shaped like himself.

This proves to be a holy man named Asal who has just arrived from the neighbouring island of civilisation where the good king Salaman reigns, and where life is regulated by a conventional religion of rewards and punishments. Asal has reached a higher level of self-discipline than his compatriots, and believing that asceticism and solitude will help him to realise his highest spiritual ambition, he has renounced the world and is come to end his days on this little island which he thinks is uninhabited. He teaches Hayy language and is astonished to discover that the pure Truth to

which Hayy has attained is the same as that symbolised by the religion which he himself professes. On learning the condition of the people on the other island, Hayy is moved with compassion and determines to go to them and offer them the benefits of his knowledge. Accordingly the two worthies set out together, Asal acting as the introducer of his distinguished friend. But the mission is a dismal failure. Hayy's exposition of the Truth is far above the heads of the vast majority of his audience, who regard it with hostility as a dangerous innovation. Enchained in the fetters of the senses, their intelligence can respond only to concrete imagery and their moral nature is in most cases amenable to nothing higher than a crude system of rewards and punishments. Hayy soon sees enough to convince him that Muhammad's way with them as expressed in the Koran was the only effective method. He apologises to them for his intrusion, exhorts them to be faithful to the religion of their fathers and returns with his friend Asal to the uninhabited island.

It is a well-constructed story, comparatively free from that diffuseness which the Oriental teller of tales can rarely avoid, and from the obscurity in which Muslim philosophers often get involved through their craze for elaborate refinements. No doubt Ibn Tufail could split

hairs with the ablest dialecticians at the Caliph's court, but in this book he endeavours to make his exposition simple and concise in the interests of the intelligent layman. (Even so, there remains quite enough metaphysical verbiage to strain the patience of many a reader.) For although in general he supports the Almohad principle of withholding the teachings of philosophy from the multitude, it is clear that he was opposed to its too rigorous application, and that he recognised an intelligent section of the masses who deserved instruction and to whom allegory was the best means of conveying it. Consequently he has left us one of the best short stories in Arabic. The natural development of its theme and the relevance and cogency of its details would be difficult to match in the literature of Islam. Further, it offers a concise survey of Arabic philosophy and of its conflict or compromise with the demands of Muhammadan theology.

The term "Arabic philosophy" means, of course, nothing indigenous to Arabia, but little more than Greek philosophy in an Arab dress. For its origin one must look back to the eighth century and to the Eastern end of the Mediterranean. The Muslim armies had by that time carried their religious creed and battle cry, "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is

his Apostle," far beyond the frontiers of Arabia. The centre of government had been moved from Medina to Damascus, which was now the metropolis of a vast empire stretching from the Atlantic to the Indus and from the Caspian to the Cataracts of the Nile. Having possessed themselves of half the known world, the Muslims began to look with curious eyes on the treasures of Greek philosophy and science, of which the chief custodians within their borders were the Syriac-speaking communities, Christian and pagan, of Syria and Mesopotamia. During the next two centuries, at the instigation usually of some Caliph or Wazir, a multitude of Greek scientific works, many of them pseudonymous, were translated from the Syriac into Arabic. Damascus witnessed the first feeble indications of this Oriental renaissance. But it was not until the 'Abbasid Dynasty seized the reins of government and made Baghdad the centre of the empire that Islamic culture burst into full flower. The first century of 'Abbasid rule (750-850) marks the golden age of Islam. Under the enlightened patronage of Caliphs like al-Mansur (754-775) and al-Ma'mun (813-833), the translation of Greek works into Arabic was pursued with passionate enthusiasm. But men of Arab blood had very little to do with the production of these translations or of the vast

multitude of learned Arabic treatises based upon them which were written during the succeeding centuries. Nearly all the scientific literature in Arabic was the work of Persians, Syrians, Spaniards, Jews and other non-Arabs. "Some four or five centuries later, European seekers after knowledge, cut off from the original Greek sources, betook themselves with ever-increasing enthusiasm to this Arabian presentation of the ancient learning and rehabilitated it in a Latin dress; and for the first century after the discovery of the art of printing, the Latin renderings of Arabic philosophical, scientific and medical works constituted a considerable proportion of the output of the European press; until a revival of a direct knowledge of the Greek originals in the first place, and the inauguration of a fresh, fruitful and first-hand investigation of natural phenomena in the second, robbed them to a great extent of their prestige and their utility and changed the excessive veneration in which they had hitherto been held into an equally exaggerated contempt."[1]

Most of the Greek philosophy which reached the Muslims arrived in the form in which it had been preserved in its Syriac medium. Thus Plato was received largely in the Neo-Platonic interpretation, and Aristotle as developed by the

[1] E. G. Browne, *Arabian Medicine*, pp. 2, 3

later Peripatetic schools. Early in the ninth century a Christian of Emessa, in the Lebanon, marvellously confused the issue by producing an Arabic paraphrase of part of the Enneads of Plotinus, and calling it, probably in all innocence, *The Theology of Aristotle*. The influence of this work, which helped to give the followers of the Prophet quite a false idea of the Peripatetic system, runs through the whole of Muslim thought and is evident in this story of Hayy ibn Yaqzan.

In those early days Muslim thinkers, obsessed by Islamic dogma, naturally assumed a theological attitude towards philosophy. The sages of classical antiquity appeared to them almost as prophets, and indeed were called *imams*, just like Muhammadan religious teachers. They were regarded as infallible; but God's messenger, Muhammad, was also infallible. No inconsistency or error could be admitted on any side. Plato was truth, Aristotle was truth, and the Koran was truth. But truth must be one. Consequently much ingenuity and ink was expended in the mad attempt to harmonise the teachings of these three. The bolder spirits were not so respectful to Islamic theology, regarding it as merely a preliminary step towards the higher truth contained in the teaching of the Greeks. In the effort to solve this fantastic problem, all

the resources of Aristotelian definition and syllogism were exhausted in vain. Its substance defied such rough chemistry, and soon we meet with the first Muslim attempts to make it yield up its essential gold, its one truth, by subjecting it to the elixir of mysticism. Mysticism of a purely ascetic and devotional character was not unknown to the Arabian desert, but as soon as it grew speculative it became strongly influenced by Neo-Platonic thought.

Chief among the labourers in this field was al-Farabi, who died in 950, the Second Teacher, as the Muslims called him, i.e. the second Aristotle. A native of Farab in Turkestan, he travelled the Eastern empire in pursuit of knowledge and finally joined the intellectual group which gathered round Prince Saif al-Daulah, in his court at Aleppo. Physics, metaphysics, medicine, mathematics, philology and music all came within his sweep. Besides commentaries on several works of Aristotle, a large number of original treatises flowed from his pen, including dissertations on the Intelligence and the Intelligible, the Soul, the Faculties of the Soul, the One, Substance, Time, Space. On the plane of discursive reason his power and subtlety are remarkable. But his Oriental love of syncretism was not to be suppressed, and displayed itself in such treatises as *The Harmony of Plato*

and Aristotle, *The Intentions of Plato and Aristotle*, *The Intermediary between Aristotle and Galen*. His ambition was to harmonise the different Greek systems and then harmonise the result with the teachings of the Koran. Thus his celestial architecture is a blend of Aristotle's spheres and Muhammad's seven heavenly mansions. Allah and his angels, the *Tablet*, the *Pen*, the *Throne*, of the Koran, fraternise with the ἕν, ψυχή and νοῦς of Plotinus. He was a mystic in the real as well as the academic sense, and his method of reconciling the members of his eclectic *ménage* is by no means always clear to the uninitiated. Al-Farabi played the leading part in directing the course of Muslim philosophy, and it was from him more than from any other of the Muhammadan thinkers of the East that Ibn Tufail in Spain drew his inspiration.

Our author borrowed the names of his characters, but little more than this, from Ibn Sina (Avicenna). This celebrated philosopher and physician of Persian nationality who died in 1037, and whose medical teaching was accepted in Europe until as late as the seventeenth century, had left among his multitudinous writings an allegorical tale of a few pages entitled *Hayy ibn Yaqzan*, a mechanical and lifeless production compared with Ibn Tufail's story, and quite different from it in plan. But another influence

nearer home is unmistakable. Ibn Tufail's elder Spanish contemporary, Ibn Bajjah, known to Europe as Avempace, was the author of a work called *Tadbir al-Mutawahhid*, i.e. *The Hermit's Régime*. Although the Arabic original is now lost, a long analysis of it preserved to us in the Hebrew of Moses of Narbonne shows that Ibn Bajjah's theme was to demonstrate how man by the unaided improvement of his faculties may attain to union with the Active Intellect. This book was well known to Ibn Tufail, and doubtless gave him the idea of his *Self-taught Philosopher*.

But the source of his ideas is of less importance than his imaginative handling of them. No other Arabic writer who has attempted this didactic form has achieved anything like the measure of Ibn Tufail's success in clothing his dissertation in the garb of romance, making concepts manifest in human creatures and reasonings in episodes. Hayy and Asal, the two main characters, are not mechanical figures with labels attached. The author has endowed them with life. Their rôle is to give some sort of realistic presentation of Soaring Intellect and Enlightened Faith, and their adventures are by no means devoid of instruction and entertainment even to a modern eye.

The title-page contains a hint of the author's

intention. His hero's symbolical name, Hayy ibn Yaqzan, means "Alive son of Awake." Alive, because he is Intelligence, which implies life; Son of Awake, to indicate his relation to the Eternal One who exists in that super-conscious state described by Plotinus as "wakefulness" or "awareness" (ἐγρήγορσις). This conception was associated in the Muslim mind with the description of God from the celebrated "Throne Verse" of the Koran: "Allah, there is no god but he; the living, the self-subsisting; slumber taketh him not, nor sleep." The hero's career is appropriate to his name. It is the pilgrim soul's upward progress; its return home to its "Father" through a series of ascending stages. In short, one of the main objects of this modest little book is nothing less than to dramatise the process of continuous development from sense-perception up to the beatific vision of the One.

Most of the story is a description of this spiritual ascent, fashioned mainly out of Neo-Platonic and Aristotelian elements, with here and there a confirmatory passage from the Koran. But this is only part of the author's design. His central idea, implicit here, but boldly worked out at the close, is the old one of harmonising philosophy and religion, and a quaint descriptive picture of this constitutes the

last scene. Most Muslim thinkers naturally cherished the conviction that philosophy permitted a purer vision of spiritual reality than did the religion of the Koran; but there was often danger to life or limb in expressing this too plainly. Ibn Tufail, however, having the Caliph's permission to declare himself, puts into the mouth of his saintly Crusoe some quiet criticism of Koranic theology and ethics. Thus when Hayy has heard Asal's description of that " Perspicuous Book " which God sent down to men by his messenger Muhammad, he recognises it instantly by his self-developed intellect as an expression of the Eternal Truth. But two of its features perplex him. First, what can be the point of all that sensuous language in it about God and the hereafter? A strange habit, surely, of those creatures on the island of civilisation to regard the Almighty as seated on a throne and the future world as an immense beer-garden and torture-chamber. But our noble savage, being a philosopher, uses a more chaste periphrasis. He wonders " Why this Messenger of God, in describing most things which relate to the Divine World, us'd to express them to Men by Parables or Similitudes, and waiv'd a clearer Revelation of them; which occasion'd Men to fall into that grave Error of asserting a Corporeity in God, and attributing to the

Essence of that True One Things from which it is absolutely free; and so in like manner, concerning those things which relate to the Rewards and Punishments of a Future State." On this question he is strongly on the side of the angels, i.e. of the Almohad state religion, to which, as we have seen, anthropomorphic notions were anathema. Secondly, why is this Book of God so much concerned with legislation on mundane matters; buying, selling, inheritance, marriage, and so forth? Before the soul can start on its journey heavenward, is not its most imperative need to free itself of these loads and chains of earthly passion?

Evidently the Koran presented many stumbling blocks to an enlightened spirit like Ibn Tufail. If only the Prophet, five centuries before, had been inspired to preach Plato to the Arabian tribesmen instead of a mixture mainly of garbled Jewish and Christian theology, and if only his Bedouin hearers could have inwardly digested it as easily as this solitary and uncontaminated islander, all would have been right with our philosopher's medieval world. Here, as we might expect, is the source of most of the trouble between Islamic philosophy and dogma. The holy water of Zemzem had too much "body" in it to please the palates of these Muslim philosophers who had drunk deep at

the more sublimated springs of pagan thought. Those anthropomorphic crudities of the Koran, however keenly they may have been relished in the desert, caused not a little embarrassment to later and more sophisticated ages. Yet the orthodox refused to abate one jot of their belief in verbal inspiration. This Book contained the mightiest miracle of truth and eloquence the world had ever heard or ever would hear, and the illiteracy of the Prophet who delivered it was proudly emphasied by the devout as an enhancement of the miracle. The Arabic language in which it was revealed was God's language, and the grammarians were at liberty to quote the Divine Being as the supreme authority on Arabic syntax.

Concerning the life hereafter, God had spoken in his Koran with no uncertain voice; for example: " The description of paradise, which is promised unto the pious: therein are rivers of incorruptible water; and rivers of milk, the taste whereof changeth not; and rivers of wine, pleasant unto those who drink; and rivers of clarified honey; and therein shall they have plenty of all kinds of fruits; and pardon from their Lord. Shall the man for whom these things are prepared be as they who must dwell for ever in hell-fire, and will have the boiling water given them to drink, which shall burst

their bowels?"[1] and again: "They shall dwell in gardens of delight . . . reposing on couches adorned with gold and precious stones; sitting opposite to one another thereon. Youths, which shall continue in their bloom for ever, shall go round about to attend them, with goblets and beakers and a cup of flowing wine: their heads shall not ache by drinking the same, neither shall their reason be disturbed: and with fruits of the sorts which they shall choose, and the flesh of birds of the kind which they shall desire. And there shall accompany them fair damsels having large black eyes; resembling pearls hidden in their shells: as a reward for that which they shall have wrought. They shall not hear therein any vain discourse, or any charge of sin; but only the salutation, Peace! Peace!"[2] Likewise he had sought to deter the Arabs from unbelief by promises of hell such as this: "And they who believe not shall have garments of fire fitted unto them: boiling water shall be poured on their heads; their bowels shall be dissolved thereby, and also their skins; and they shall be beaten with maces of iron."[3] Greed was to have the following appropriate reward: "But unto those who treasure up gold and silver, and employ it not for the advancement of God's true

[1] Koran, XLVII, 16, 17. [2] Koran, LVI, 12-25. [3] Koran, XXII, 20, 21. (Sale's translation.)

religion, denounce a grievous punishment. On the day of judgment their treasures shall be intensely heated in the fire of hell, and their foreheads and their sides and their backs shall be stigmatized therewith; and their tormentors shall say, This is what ye have treasured up for yourselves; taste therefore that which ye have treasured up."[1]

The philosophic mind recoiled from such hearty outbursts. They could only be accepted, if at all, as *images* of the spiritual rewards and punishments awaiting the soul hereafter. But Ibn Tufail was a stickler for pure concepts and had little patience even with images. Indeed he is constrained to end his tale with an apology to his initiated friends for having stooped to the use of allegory. Ibn al-'Arabi of Murcia, perhaps the greatest of the Muhammadan mystics, who was born about sixty years after Ibn Tufail, offers the following intelligent explanation of the Koran's lurid eschatology: "Allah," he says, "has depicted paradise in accordance with the different degrees of man's understanding. The Messiah (on whom be peace) emphasised its spiritual joys, to which we have referred above, and concluded his last instructions to his disciples with these words: 'If ye do that which I command you, to-morrow ye shall be with me

[1] Koran, IX, 34, 35. (Sale's translation.)

in the kingdom of heaven in the presence of him who is my Lord and your Lord. Ye shall behold around his throne the angels praising and glorifying him. And there ye shall enjoy all manner of delights without partaking either of food or drink.' If the Messiah was explicit on this matter and used none of the figurative language which our Book uses, this was because he was addressing a people already civilised by the Torah and by reading the books of the prophets, so that their minds were prepared to receive his words. Not so with our prophet Muhammad. His divine mission lay among an uncultured people inhabiting deserts and mountains; who lacked the discipline of learning and believed neither in the resurrection nor the future life; to whom even the pleasures of the princes of this world were unknown, let alone those of the kings in heaven. Accordingly in his Book most of the descriptions of paradise relate to the body, that so they might the better incline the people's understanding and fill their souls with desire."[1]

The hero of our tale is imbued with the missionary spirit and is determined to let mankind hear his higher truth. But the event shows that most men have no desire to hear it, and are really much happier without it, the simple letter

[1] Al-Sha'rani, *Al-Yawaqit* (1888), II, 216. Quoted by Asin, *Islam and the Divine Comedy*, p. 139.

of the law being quite difficult enough for their apprehension and usually too difficult for their performance, without their attempting any mystic interpretation. Hayy has not been long on the island of civilisation till he discovers that free and knowing spirits like himself are quite the exception there. Indeed he hardly realised how free and knowing he himself was till he collided with human society, which he finds to his horror falls roughly into two classes, the invincibly ignorant and brutish, and the complacent adherents of an institutional and mechanical religion. To appeal to the first was hopeless, and he did not try. His attempt on the second only awoke misgiving and anger in their hearts. They would have none of his new theology. With an audacity clothed in humble piety was he not presuming to out-prophet the Prophet of God? Fortunately for Hayy, their Oriental sense of hospitality seems to have checked their herd instinct for heresy hunting, besides which their king, Salaman, was on his side (in whom we may easily recognise the Caliph Abu Ya'qub, friend of philosophers, the enlightened patron of our author Ibn Tufail and of Averroes) so that he was secure from the bitter fate of most religious reformers.

But within the pale of this conventional religion is a small minority of souls with some

spiritual discernment of the realities embodied in the creeds, rites and ceremonies of the faith. To speed their nearer approach to God they strip themselves of earthly possessions and pursue their quest in solitude. Theirs is a different path from the philosopher's, but their goal is the same—to be absorbed in the Divine Essence. Asal is the personification of this Sufi elect. His vision, although more obscured than Hayy's by reason of the sensuous veil of Koranic symbolism, is equally incommunicable to the multitude. As for the average man's religion, these two Gnostic aristocrats see it from their exalted planes as a regrettable but necessary vulgarisation of the Truth. Allah the Merciful, the Compassionate, will rescue the less fortunate mass of his creatures who are constitutionally unable to attain this purer illumination, provided they walk faithfully in the light they possess. Hayy's belief in the unity of soul-life receives a rude shock when he is confronted with humanity in the flesh. His missionary fervour cools when he realises that "the whole lump" is not to be leavened by exhortation, even though he testify with the tongues of men and angels to the glories of his spiritual experience, and he easily finds a divine sanction for his retreat from this distressing piece of reality. An understanding of all mysteries and all knowledge, suffused with an

academic philanthropy, was evidently not equipment enough to help him far on his stupendous enterprise.

And so these two ineffectual angels depart to the island whence they came, there to live in harmony ever afterwards, engrossed in achieving their own spiritual perfection. The reconciliation of theology and philosophy is again brought about by the extension of both into the world of mysticism. This higher harmony is pictured as a human partnership; but Hayy the philosopher, we are delicately reminded, remains ever the predominant partner, for, after all, the mystical island was his discovery; and the regenerate theologian who dwells there as a dearly beloved colleague may almost but never quite rise to the spiritual eminence of his friend.[1] Such is our gentle heretic's soft answer to the dictum that philosophy is the handmaid of theology; whether it would suffice in his day to turn away the wrath of orthodox Islam is another question.

[1] Ibn al-'Arabi of Murcia (1165-1240), in his voluminous mystical work entitled *Al-Futuhat al-Makkiyya* or the *Revelations of Mecca,* introduces an allegory describing the ascent to heaven of a theologian accompanied by a rationalist philosopher. But in this case the theologian far outstrips the philosopher, who finds himself obliged to embrace the Muslim faith before he is permitted to join his companion on the highest plane of mystical contemplation. A summary of the allegory is given by Asin, *Islam and the Divine Comedy,* pp. 47-51

Ibn Tufail's popularity outside the Muhammadan world, particularly in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, may be judged from the following list of the texts, translations and adaptations of his story which have appeared in Europe.

The Arabic text was first published, together with a scrupulously literal Latin translation, under the title *Philosophus Autodidactus*, by Edward Pocock junior (son of the great English pioneer in Oriental studies), at Oxford, in 1671, and reprinted there in 1700. Pocock's Latin was rendered anonymously into Dutch in 1672, a second edition appearing in 1701, in which the translator's name figures as " S.D.B." George Keith, the Quaker, in 1674 (for propaganda purposes), and George Ashwell, in 1686, published English translations, each of them from Pocock's Latin. In 1708 Simon Ockley's version, made direct from the Arabic, was published in London, reprinted there in 1711, and again in Dublin in 1731. (From 1711 till his death in 1720 Ockley was Professor of Arabic at Cambridge.) Two German versions were produced in the eighteenth century, one made from Pocock's Latin by J. Georg Pritius in 1726, and the other, an accurate rendering of the original Arabic by J. G. Eichhorn, in 1783. An anonymous Crusoe story was printed in London in 1761, entitled *The Life and Sur-*

prising Adventures of Don Antonio de Trezzanio, much of which is either " conveyed " or paraphrased from Ockley's version of *Hayy ibn Yaqzan. The Awakening of the Soul* (Wisdom of the East Series, London, 1904), by Paul Brönnle, is a translation from the Arabic of " the most interesting parts " of the romance. A translation in Spanish of the complete story, more exact than any of its predecessors, was published by F. Pons Boigues at Saragossa in 1900, with an introduction by M. Menéndez y Pelayo. But by far the most important advance since the days of Pocock was made by Prof. Léon Gauthier, whose excellent critical edition of the text accompanied by a careful French rendering appeared in 1900 at Algiers.

Pocock's Latin version has all the merits and defects of a slavish adherence to the letter of the Arabic. Ockley's tendency is very much to the other extreme. His keen relish of the spirit of the original and his aversion from pedantry reveal themselves repeatedly in renderings of singular neatness. On the other hand he often takes liberties with his original which are quite unwarranted. In the present edition an attempt has been made to correct such lapses, without offering any unnecessary violence to Ockley's work. A number of emendations have been made at the dictation of Gauthier's Arabic text,

which is our best authority and much superior to the text upon which Ockley depended.

Ibn Tufail wrote a short introduction to his romance, in which he discusses briefly some of the views held by the leading Muslim exponents of mystic philosophy before his time, namely, al-Farabi, Avicenna, al-Ghazali and Avempace. This is omitted from Ashwell's translation and from the 1731 edition of Ockley's version. We also have omitted it since it contains nothing of general interest.

In Ockley's first edition (1708) the bookseller commends the work to the reader in these words, which it may not be inappropriate to repeat:

> And tho' we do not pretend to any Discoveries in this Book, especially at this time of Day, when all parts of Learning are cultivated with so much Exactness; yet we hope that it will not be altogether unacceptable to the curious Reader, to know what the state of Learning was among the Arabs, five hundred Years since. And if what we shall here communicate, shall seem little in respect of the Discoveries of this discerning Age; yet we are confident that any European who shall compare the Learning in this book, with what was publish'd by any of his own Countrymen at that time, will find himself oblig'd in Conscience to give our Author fair Quarter.

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The Dedication

To the Reverend
Mr. Edward Pococke,
Rector of MINAL,
in Wiltshire.

Reverend Sir .

Hayy Ibn Yaqzan returns to you again, in a dress different from that which you sent him out in. Wherever he comes, he acknowledges you for his first and best master ; and confesses that his being put in a capacity to travel through Europe is owing to your hand. I could not in equity send him to any other person, you being the sole proprietor. And as your learning enables you to do him justice, so your candor will incline you to pardon what is by me done amiss. Both which qualifications you enjoy, as a Paternal Inheritance, descending from the reverend and learned Dr. Pococke, the glory and ornament of our age and nation. Whose memory I much reverence, and how much I acknowledge myself indebted to him for his learned works, I thought I could no way express better than by taking some opportunity to pay my respects to you, Sir, the worthy son of so great a father. And no fitter bearer than Hayy Ibn Yaqzan, with whose character and language you are so well acquainted, and to whom you have long ago shown so great a respect that I have no reason to fear but he will be welcome.

I am,
Sir,
Your most Humble Servant,
Simon Ockley

PREFACE

When Mr. Pococke first published this Arabic Author with his accurate Latin version, *Anno* 1671, Dr. Pococke his father, that late eminent professor of the oriental languages in the university of Oxford, prefixed a Preface to it; in which he tells us that he has good reason to think that this author was contemporary with Ibn Rushd, who died very ancient in the Year of the Hijrah 595, which is coincident with the Year 1198 of our Lord; according to which account the Author lived something above 500 Years ago.

He lived in Spain, as appears from one or two passages in this book. He wrote some other pieces, which are not come to our hands. This has been very well received in the East; one argument of which is that it has been translated by Rabbi Moses Narbonensis into Hebrew, and illustrated with a large commentary. The design of the author is to show how human capacity, unaided by any external help, may, by due application, attain to the Knowledge of natural things, and so by degrees find out its dependance upon a Superior Being, the immortality of the soul, and all things necessary to salvation.

How well he has succeeded in this attempt, I leave to the reader to judge. It is certain that he was a man of parts and very good learning, considering the age he lived in, and the way of studying in those times. There are a great many lively strokes in it; and I doubt not but a judicious reader will find his account in the perusal of it.

I was not willing (though importuned) to undertake the translating into English, because I was informed that it had been done twice already; once by Dr. Ashwell, another time by the Quakers, who imagined that there was something in it that favored their enthusiastic notions. However, taking it for granted that both these translations were not made out of the original Arabic, but out of the Latin, I did not question but they had mistaken the sense of the author in many places. Besides, observing that a great many of my friends whom I had a desire to oblige, and other persons whom I would willingly incline to a more favorable opinion of Arab Learning, had not seen this book; and withal, hoping that I might add something by way of annotation or appendix, which would not be altogether useless; I at last ventured to translate it anew.

I have here and there added a note, in which there is an account given of some great man, some custom of the Muslims explained, or something of that nature, which I hope will not be unacceptable. And lest any person should, through mistake, make any ill use of it, I have subjoined an appendix, the design of which the reader may see in its proper place.

SIMON OCKLEY.

The Bookseller to the Reader

When I first undertook the publication of this English Translation, I thought it would not be amiss to present the world with a specimen of it first. But, since the introduction is such that the reader can no more by it give a guess at what is contained in the book itself, than a man can judge of his entertainment by seeing the cloth laid; I have thought it necessary to give him a Bill of Fare.

The design of the author, who was a Muslim philosopher, is to show how human reason may, by observation and experience, arrive at the knowledge of natural things, and from thence to supernatural; particularly the knowledge of God and a future state. And in order to this, he supposes a person brought up by himself, where he was altogether destitute of any instruction, but what he could get from his own observation.

He lays the scene in some **Fortunate** Island, situate under the Equinoctial; where he supposes the philosopher, either to have been bred (according to Ibn Sina's hypothesis, who conceived a possibility of a man's being formed by the influence of the planets upon Matter rightly disposed) without either father or mother; or else exposed in his infancy, and providentially suckled by a roe. Not that our author believed any such matter, but only having designed to contrive a convenient place for his philosopher, so as to leave him to reason by himself, and make his observations without any guide. In which relation he proposes both these ways, without speaking one word in favor of either.

Then he shows by what steps and degrees he advanced in the knowledge of natural things, till at last he perceived the necessity of acknowledging an infinite, eternal, wise Creator, and also the immateriality and immortality of his own soul, and that its happiness consisted only in a continued conjunction with this supreme Being.

The matter of this book is curious, and full of useful theorems; he makes most use of the Peripatetic Philosophy, which he seems to have well understood; it must be confessed indeed that when he comes to talk of the union with God, etc., (as in the introduction), there are some enthusiastic notions, which are particulary considered and refuted by the editor in his appendix.

Whose design in publishing this translation was to give those who are as yet unacquainted with it, a taste of the acumen and genius of the Arab philosophers, and to excite young scholars to the reading of those authors which, through a groundless conceit of their impertinence and ignorance, have been too long neglected.

And though we do not pretend to any discoveries in this book, especially at this time of day, when all parts of learning are cultivated with so much exactness; yet we hope that it will not be altogether unacceptable to the curious reader, to know what the state of learning was among the Arabs five hundred years since. And if what we shall here communicate shall seem little in respect of the discoveries of this discerning age; yet we are confident that any **European**, who shall compare the learning in this book with what was published by any of his own countrymen at that time, will find himself obliged in conscience to give our Author fair quarter.

In few Days will be publiſh'd,

THE Conqueſt of *Syria*, *Perſia*, and *Ægypt*, by the *Saracens*. Containing the Lives of *Abubeker*, *Omar*, and *Othman*. The immediate Succeſſors of *Mahomet*. Illuſtrating the Religion, Rites, Cuſtoms, and manner of Living of that Warlike People. Alſo an Account of their moſt remarkable Battels, Sieges; particularly thoſe of *Aleppo*, *Antioch*, *Damaſcus*, *Alexandria*, and *Jeruſalem*. Collected from the moſt Authentick *Arabick* Authors; eſpecially Manuſcripts, not hitherto publiſh'd in any *European* Language. By *Simon Ockley*, M. A. and Vicar of *Sawveſey* in *Cambridgſhire*.

Sold by *R. Knaplock* in St. *Paul*'s *Churchyard*. *J. Sprint* in *Little Britain*. *B. Lintot* in *Fleet-ſtreet*. *R. Smith* in *Cornhill*, and *J. Round* in *Exchange-Alley*.

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TO THE

Right Honourable.

PHILIP Ld *WENMAN*,

Baron of *Kilmaynham*,

And Viſcount

TUAM.

My Lord,

YOU may pleaſe to remember, that ſome while ago I acquainted your Lordſhip, with my intention to Tranſlate into Engliſh the Life of *Hai Eb'n Yockdan*, or *The Self-taught Philoſopher*; which had been ſet forth ſome years before, in Arabick and Latin, by the Care and Pains of our

Learned Profeſſor of the Oriental Tongues in the Univerſity of *Oxford*. At which time you were pleaſed, not only to encourage me unto the work, but even to ingage me to the undertaking it. Since that, I have diſpatched it at laſt, after many Diverſions, and amidſt as many Interruptions. And upon the Review have ventured to ſend it abroad into the World; being willing to hope, that it may not only pleaſe for the rarity of the Subject, but profit alſo in ſome meaſure and Degree, in regard of its Commodiouſneſs and Seaſonableneſs; among the Men of this licentious Generation, whereof ſome are too looſe in their Principles, and others in their Practices; the one living by no Rule, and the other by no certain

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one, but giddily following their own Phancies, or other Mens Opinions, whom they have unadviſedly choſen to themſelves for the Guides of their Faith and Manners. Whereas the Philoſopher, whoſe life is here deſcribed, will inſtruct them in ſuch principles of Morality and Religion, and ſuch alone, as the light of Nature diſcovers, and which muſt needs be acknowledged for True by all thoſe, who will judge and act as Men, according to the Dictates of Reaſon, and the Concluſions reſulting from Experience. And I heartily wiſh indeed, that All of us were arrived even thus far, by the guidance of this light, and agreed in ſuch principles as humane Reaſon teacheth out of the Book of Nature, which ſets forth to our view Gods

works of Creation and Providence. For this foundation being laid, there would be more hopes of agreement about that, which the Supernatural light of Revelation diſcovers to our Faith, and ſuperſtructs thereupon. But your Lordſhip will find the uſefulneſs of this Hiſtory, in its Philoſophical and Theological diſcoveries, more amply ſet down in the Preface, which comprehends the chief particulars, and acquaints the Reader with the main of it deſign. And however my deſign in publiſhing this Tranſlation thrive abroad in the World, yet I have good hope that it will not fall of its end in obtaining your Lordſhip's favourable Acceptance, and remain as a Teſtimonial of my Gratitude for the many, and long

continued

continued favours, received from your Lordſhip; which as they do at preſent, ſo will always ingage me for the future, to ſhew and approve my ſelf upon all good Opportunities,

My much honoured Lord,

Your Lordſhip's moſt
Humble, Faithful, and
much Obliged Servant,

Geo. Aſhwell.

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THE PREFACE.

WE are told by our learned Professour of the Oriental Tongues in the University of Oxford, who caused this History to be set forth in the Original Arabick, and thence translated into Latine; that the Author hereof was Abi Jaafar Eb'n Tophail, an Arabian Philosopher, and a Mahometan; otherwise called, Abubecher. As also, that he was Contemporary with Eb'n Roshd, usually called Averroes, and somewhat Elder than He. Now this Averroes died, being very Old, in the year of the Heira 595, which is co-incident with the year of our Lord

Lord 1198. *So that by this Computation, this Author flouriſhed about* 500 *years ago. He wrote this Hiſtory in the form of an Epiſtle, and ſo entitles it; for by this name the* Arabians *uſe to call their ſhorter Treatiſes. That both the Author, and the Book, were of good credit, appears by the Teſtimony, not only of the* Arabians *his Countrymen, but alſo of the Jews. The ſaid* Averroes *calls him, The Honourable Judge* Abubecher Ben Tophail. *This Hiſtory alſo of His was of old tranſlated into Hebrew, and well accepted of by the Jews. For* Moſes Narbonenſis *in his Preface thereto, and Comment thereupon, commends the Author. So doth alſo* Mardochæus Comtino, *another Jew, more than once. The Deſign of the Author in this Book is to ſhew, how far a Perſon of an excellent Wit, and towardly Diſpoſition, being deſtitute of Humane Society, and conſequently*

ſequently without the direction and aſſiſtance of any other, may advance Himſelf in Knowledge, by improving his own Reaſon to the utmoſt Pitch, in the ſearch of Things both Natural, and above Nature, with the ſole help and exerciſe of his own Meditation, and Obſervations upon it. Wherein he diſcovers and preſcribes a Method unto thoſe, who will apply themſelves to ſuch Contemplations, and delight to make a conſiderable Progreſs in them; ſuch a ſafe and eaſie method as may be very ſerviceable and uſeful to this preſent Age, though ſo many Ages diſtant from that of the Author; an Age ſo much inclined to Fanaticiſm, Sadduciſm, and Atheiſm. He treads indeed a new unbeaten Path, wherein by ſet and orderly Degrees, He brings His Reader at length to the knowledge of God, and the upper World; beyond which ſteps, thus by him diſcovered and forepaſſed, no man can proceed

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any farther, but by the Light and Guidance of Divine Revelation. For Humane Reason is forced to fly hither, when dazled with the excessive light of these heavenly Mysteries; its poreblind sight not being able to discern Objects so high, and so far off distant; or rather groaping in the Dark to find them, by reason of its innate Dimness. This Author therefore justly condemns them, who presume to make an over-curious search, by natural light only, into such things, as neither Eye hath seen, nor Ear heard, nor are discoverable by the heart of man. To prevent which, our Author in his Preface admonisheth his Reader, what to fly, and what to follow; and taxeth the errors not only of the vulgar, but of some of the more learned Philosophers.

It must be granted indeed, that some very ingenious and learned Men of this latter Age, have endeavoured to demon-

demonſtrate the main fundamental Truths of Religion by the Light of Humane Reaſon, and the Principles of Natural Theology, which are generally acknowledged by mankind, although much differing in other points. And this may ſeem to render ſuch a Diſcourſe as this, of little or no uſe to the World in theſe Times. Yet I am willing to think otherwiſe, when I conſider that the Diſcourſes of theſe learned Men concerning this Subject, conſiſt, for the general, of ſuch Notions, Grounds, and Proofs, as are too ſubtle, ſublime, and metaphyſical for common underſtandings: ſo that they leave men ſtill in the dark; yea, more perplexed than they were before. Whereas this Author proceeds by ſuch gentle ſteps, in an eaſie and familiar way of reaſoning, which is obvious to every ones apprehenſion, that He leads his Reader inſenſibly onward, without any toilſom labour, or perplexing of his

Brains,

Drawn, in the search of the Truth, till He have brought him, before he is aware, unto the end of his journey. Or like the easie ascent of winding Stairs, which conduct to the top of an high Tower, or Pyramid, such as that in Ægypt: Or rather like the leisurely mounting of Jacob's Ladder, whereon he saw the Angels ascending, as well as descending; for like the Rounds of that, are the degrees whereby He conducts his Reader, till He have brought him up to the very top of the Ladder, where God presents Himself unto his view.

This History then, being thus Englished, and so communicated to the view of all, whereas before it was locked up to most in an unknown language, may, I hope, prove not altogether unuseful unto many in this idle, worldly and voluptuous Age, wherein men generally seek after little else besides the concerns of this present life, studying

ſtudying, and buſying themſelves about their Profit or their Pleaſure; either, in heaping up Riches with much Care and Toil, or ſpending their Days in Eaſe and carnal Delights, and making it their ſtudy how they may paſs away their time without any Care or Trouble at all. Whereas this Hiſtory ſhews the true and genuine Concerns of humane life, with the means of obtaining that felicity, which Man was born for; which it makes to conſiſt in a right and uſeful Exerciſe of thoſe faculties which God hath beſtowed upon us, and improving them to the beſt Advantage, by an induſtrious and continued experimenting of all Things that come in our way, the knowledge whereof may be uſeful to us; and making proper Obſervations upon them, as this Self-taught Philoſopher *is ſaid to have done; and as any other Man is capable of do-*

ing in like manner, who is endued with the same sagacity of mind, and ingenuity of Disposition. And such as are not, may be his Scholars, and learn with more ease such lessons as these, by what they find him to have experimented and observed. For here we find set down by what means, and by what Degrees, in the seven Septenaries of his Age, (whereinto his Life is divided in this History, and the Observations He made in each of them) He arrived to a proportionable measure of knowledge, concerning all the Accommodations of humane Life, in this lower World; how he came to find them out, and in what manner He managed and improved them: Then, what he observed, as concerning the brute Creatures, which He found in the Island, wherein He is said to have been bred; but more especially, concerning himself, both as

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to his Body, with its ſeveral Parts and faculties; and to his Soul, with its ſpiritual and immortal nature, and all the Excellencies that attend it; how He came to find them out, and what Reaſons He grounded his Obſervations upon: Then, how He examined the Natures, Properties, and uſes of the Elements; and how He thence aſcended to the Contemplation of the Heavenly Bodies, with their Light, Motions, and Influences. So that we have here ſet before us, opened, and expoſed to our Eyes, the whole Book of Nature to read, with the ways and means, whereby almoſt all Arts and Sciences came to be invented; namely, Phyſiology, Anatomy, Aſtronomy, and Geometry; alſo, Logick, and Metaphyſicks, and the Rules of Morality, which He ſet to himſelf, and whereby He governed his whole Life. But the utmoſt Height and Perfe-

ction of his Learning, whereunto all the reſt tended as ſo many Steps or Degrees, conſiſted in that natural Theology, which He arrived to, from the ſerious and attentive Conſideration of Gods works, and more particularly of himſelf; whence He concluded, that God was the ſupereminent, the ſole and independent Being, of infinite Greatneſs and Goodneſs, Wiſdom and Power, Majeſty and Glory, whoſe all-ſeeing Eye, and overruling Hand of Providence, extend themſelves to all his Creatures; who is alſo moſt Juſt and Righteous in all his Dealings with, and towards Mankind, and therefore will one Day call all Men to give an Account of their lives, when He will ſentence, and reward them according to their Works. Whereupon, He diſcourſeth of the Reſurrection, and the laſt Judgment, with the Felicities and Miſeries that attend Men after the

the Judgment is paſt, anſwerably to the condition and quality of their lives, which they led here on Earth. The former He makes to conſiſt in the Beatifical Viſion of God: But the latter He deſcribes in ſuch figurative Expreſſions, which although not altogether irrational for a meer natural Philoſopher to conjecture; yet, I ſuppoſe, are taken out of the Alcoran, *the Author of this Hiſtory being a* Mahometan *by Religion. Yet he brings in his* Self taught Philoſopher *making ſome Exceptions againſt that Book, as it was deſcribed to him by his Friend* Aſal, *and taxing it of Imperfection in ſeveral particulars, whereto He makes no particular Reply.*

This is the Summ and the main Deſign of the enſuing Hiſtory; which poſſibly (being thus Engliſhed) may do ſome good (as I even now ſaid) in this Profane and Fanatical,

as well as lewd and luxurious Age. Let them then who wilfully ſhut their Eyes againſt the light of Revelation, as being too pure and bright for them, at leaſt ſuffer themſelves to be guided by the leſs ſplendid and more familiar light of natural Reaſon. Let the Enthuſiaſts alſo, who pretend ſo much to ſupernatural Revelations, and are dazled with their fanciful lights, and ſublime ſpeculations, through the deluſion of the Prince of Darkneſs, transforming himſelf into an Angel of Light, learn from hence to know themſelves better, and to be wiſe unto Sobriety. Let the profane Jeſters and Scoffers who ſpeak ſlightingly and ſcornfully of the moſt ſerious and ſacred things, and turn all Religion into ridiculous Drollery, learn to ſpeak more reverently of God, and things Divine, from a meer natural Philoſopher, who is

the Subject of this History, and a Mahometan who is the Author of it. Let them who are unkind, and unneighbourly to those they live amongst, and so far from succouring and relieving them in their Dangers and Distresses, that they make no Conscience of getting what they can from them, either by fraud or force, whensoever it lies in their Power, and they can find an Opportunity, learn of this Self-Taught Philosopher *to be kindly affectioned towards their Neighbours, whenas they find him so kind towards all his fellow-Creatures, though of a diverse kind; so ready to supply their wants, and to free them from whatsoever evils that molested them. Let the Covetous Worldlings, who take so much pleasure in heaping up unnecessaries, which are Burdens rather than Blessings, learn of him to rest content with such a competency, as Nature*

only requires, and to be ſatisfied with the juſt Conveniences of Life. Let, laſtly, the rude, and intemperate, and inordinate livers, who are ſo ready to run into Exceſs, and to forget all the Rules of Order and Decency, learn the contrary vertues of Temperance, and Modeſty, and Regularity, from him who took ſuch an exact care about his Food and Clothing, that ſo he might not tranſgreſs in any particular, relating to either of them.

Theſe, and other good Leſſons, may be learned from hence. But there are ſome few other particulars, which it will not be amiſs to advertiſe the Reader of, to prevent ſome exceptions which otherwiſe might be taken againſt them.

Firſt, *That I have omitted two Diſcourſes in my Tranſlation, which I conceived little or nothing pertinent to the main Deſign of the Hiſtory.*

The

The one treats of the ſeveral Sects among the Mahometans, *with the Heads of thoſe Sects, and paſſeth a cenſure on their Opinions. The other argues the poſſibility of Mans Body being formed and produced out of the Earth, as Frogs and Mice, and ſome other of the ignobler Animals ſometimes are, though more ordinarily bred of Male and Female. 'An opinion which our Author is ſaid to have received from* Eb'n Sina, *commonly known by the name of* Avicenna, *who held that ſome Earth may be ſo well fitted and prepared through the excellent Temper and Diſpoſition thereof, as to become a convenient Habitacle for an humane Soul, to be infuſed thereinto by God. Such an Original as our Author ſaith, ſome fancied that* Hai Eb'n Yockdan *had. But he determines nothing in the Point, leaving all to report and the opinion of certain Philoſophers.*

It

It being all one to his Design, whether his Self-taught Philosopher *had his Body formed out of the Earth, or were born elsewhere, and thence transported into that desart Island, wherein he is said to have lived, and learned what he did, by his own Experiments and Observations.*

Secondly, *In my Translation, I have not strictly tied my self to the letter of the Latin, as he did his Latin to the Letter of the Arabick, for a good reason shewed in the Preface. But I, being not alike concerned, have thought fit to use more liberty, yet so as to keep unto the sense, which I have endeavoured to render more clear and full, hereby intending the greater profit, as well as pleasure of the Reader.*

Thirdly, *Whereas the Author brings in his* Self-taught Philosopher *very much perplexed about the Original of the World, whether*

it were made by God in time, or from all Eternity, and not able to reſolve either way, by reaſon of the Equipoiſe of Reaſons on both ſides, it is not to be wondred at; as well, becauſe it is a point very hardly, if at all, determinable by meer natural Reaſon, which was the only guide this Philoſopher is ſuppoſed to have had; as alſo becauſe the Author of this Hiſtory, was an Arabian *Philoſopher, amongſt whom* Ariſtotle's *Philoſophy is of the chiefeſt, and almoſt the only repute. Now it is generally known, that he held the World to have been from all Eternity.*

Fourthly, *Whereas he brings in his ſaid Philoſopher placing intelligent forms in the heavenly Bodies, which he calls by the name of Eſſences, and makes them to enjoy the Viſion of God in a more eminent manner, as being of a moſt excellent nature, and placed near to him; it is ſomewhat leſs*

to

to be wondred at; not only because Aristotle *held the like intelligences to reside in the Spheres, and move them about; that* Plato *also, and his followers (as is confest) held the Spheres and Stars to be living Bodies, informed by the like intelligences; but* Philo Judæus *too, and* Origen *among the ancient Doctors of the Church.* S. Jerom *is not averse to it, in his Comment on* Eccles. 1. 6. S. Aug. *in several places of his works leaves the question undetermined. He also, and* Aquinas *tell us, that it was never determined by the Church; whence it is that he, and other Schoolmen that followed him, speak so doubtfully concerning it.*

Lastly, *Whereas we find in this History several passages cited out of the* Alcoran, *whether for the confirmation or illustration of some things therein said, it is least of all to be wondred at, when we consider the Au-*

thor

thor to have been a Mahometan ; *and though they ſeem ſometimes to diſturb the ſenſe, and interrupt the coherence of the Diſcourſe, yet they paſs for elegancies and ornaments, as well as proofs, among the* Mahometans , *as Citations out of the Old Teſtament or the* Talmud, *do with the* Jews.

THE

An Advertiſement to the READER.

THis Book or Epiſtle of Abi Jaaphar, is to be found in an Hebrew Verſion, according to the account of the Latine Tranſlator; and Moſes Narbonenſis, a learned Jew, hath writ Commentaries upon it. The Author, to wit, Abi Jaaphar, lived contemporary with Averroes, who died about the year of the Chriſtian account, 1198. So that the antiquity of this Relation is about five hundred years old. Since the Latine Verſion of it came abroad (which was in the year, 1671.) it is tranſlated into Dutch ſome conſiderable time ago: after it came into my hands, and that I peruſed it, I found a great freedom in mind to put it into Engliſh for a more general ſervice, as believing it might be profitable unto many; but my particular motives which engaged me hereunto was, that I found ſome good things in it, which were both very ſavoury and refreſhing unto me: and indeed there are ſome ſentences in

it that I highly approve, as where he ſaith, Preach not thou the ſweet ſavour of a thing thou haſt not taſted; *and again where he ſaith,* In the riſing of the Sun is that which maketh, that thou haſt not need of *Saturn. Alſo, he ſhoweth excellently how far the* knowledge *of a man, whoſe eyes are ſpiritually opened, differeth from that* knowledge *that men acquire ſimply by* hear-ſay, *or* reading: *and what he ſpeaks of a degree of knowledge attainable, that is not by* premiſſes premiſed, *and* concluſions deduced, *is a certain truth,* the which is enjoyed in the conjunction of the mind of man with the ſupreme Intellect, after the mind is purified from its corruptions, and is ſeparated from all bodily images, and is gathered into a profound ſtillneſs. *Theſe with many other profitable things, agreeable to Chriſtian Principles, are to be found here. But,* Reader, *I am far from urging thee to receive for certain, every thing in this Book; nor do I recommend every thing in it unto thee for truth: yet whatever may be otherwiſe in it, doth not hinder to make a good uſe of the things which are both true and profitable contained therein, and if thy taſte be ſound, re-*

ceive

ceive what is agreeable thereunto, and paſs by what is otherwiſe. The deſign of the Author is far (I believe) from perſwading men to ſlight or refuſe the help of outward means *of knowledge, ſuch as the teſtimonies of good and wiſe men; and indeed it is as far from my own deſign, who have undertaken this Tranſlation: It is the too much relying and reſting upon them, and neglecting thoſe* native *and* inward teſtimonies *in the ſoul and mind of man it ſelf, that both the ſcope of the Book and my deſign in the Tranſlation doth fence againſt. If it appear unto thee, that the* Author, *or yet the* perſon *of whom he writeth, hath been a good man, and far beyond many who have the name of* Chriſtians, *that have had better outward opportunities to learn to be good then he, ſuch as the uſe of the* holy Scriptures *and other helps; think not ſtrange of it, but remember, there have been inſtances of good men mentioned in the* Scriptures, *who had not the Oracles of God outwardly delivered unto them, ſuch as* Job, *the three wiſe* men *of the Eaſt,* Cornelius *and others. Yea,* Juſtine Martyr *ſtuck not to call* Socrates *a* Chriſtian, and that all who lived conform unto that divine reaſon and

word

word in them, and which is in all men, (*as ſaid the above-mentioned Author, in one of his Apologies*) were and are Chriſtians. *I ſhall conclude with a ſaying of* Auguſtine, de civitate Dei, *lib.* 18. *cap.* 47. *and another of* Ludovicus Vives, *in his Commentary on the ſame words:* Nor do I think (*ſaith* Auguſtine) that the Jews dare contend, that none belonged unto God, but the Iſraelites. *On which* Ludovicus Vives *ſaith thus*; So great a matter is it to be willing to be good, although thou haſt not any from whom thou mayeſt be taught vertue: and in this ſort of men, what is wanting but water? ſeing they have obtained and received the holy ſpirit no otherwiſe then the Apoſtles, *Peter* witneſſing, that ſome were filled with a divine inſpiration, whom the myſtical water had not touched: ſo the Gentiles not having a Law, and naturally doing the things of the Law, are a Law to themſelves, and that light of ſo living is the gift of God, and cometh from the Son, of whom it is written, who enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world.

8 NO59

An

HAYY IBN YAQZĀN a Philosophical Tale of IBN TUFAYL

In the name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate. 3
God bless our master Muhammad,
his house and companions and grant them peace.

Noble brother, my dear, kind friend, God grant you eternal life and everlasting happiness. You have asked me to unfold for you, as well as I am able, the secrets of the oriental philosophy[1] mentioned by the prince of philosophers, Avicenna.[2] Then you must know from the start that if you want the truth without flummery you must seek it and seek it diligently.[3] 4

Your request set off a stream of ideas in me—praise God—which lifted me to a state of sublimity I had never known before, a state so wonderful "the tongue cannot describe" or explain it, for it belongs to another order of being, a different world. But the joy, delight and bliss of this ecstasy[4] are such that no one who has reached it or even come near it can keep the secret or conceal the mystery.[5] The lightheadedness, expansiveness,[6] and joy which seize him force him to blurt it out in some sweeping generality, for to capture it precisely is impossible. If he be the sort whose mind has not been sharpened by intellectual pursuits, he may speak unwisely.[7] Thus in this state one said "Praise be to me, great am I!"[8] Another said "I am the Truth";[9] another, "There is within this robe nothing but God!"[10] It was his own attainment of this ecstasy that Ghazālī[11] attempted to portray when he wrote:

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It *was*—what it was is harder to say.
Think the best, but don't make me describe it away.[12]

5 But his was a mind refined by learning and education.[13]

Look at the words Ibn Bājja appended to his discussion of communion with the divine:[14] "Once these ideas are understood it will be clear that nothing learned in ordinary studies can reach this level. For once this concept is grasped the mind can see itself as cut off from all that went before, with new convictions that cannot have arisen from the world of matter, too splendid to have sprung from the material since they are cleansed of all the compositeness characteristic of the physical world. Surely it would be more appropriate to call them divine ecstasies granted by God to those He will."

The level to which Ibn Bājja refers is reached by use of reason, and no doubt he reached it—but he did not surpass it. The level of which I spoke at the outset is something quite different,[15] although the two are alike in that nothing revealed here contradicts what is revealed by reason.[16] The
6 difference is in an increase in what is seen and in the fact that this is experienced through what I must, only figuratively, call a faculty:[17] For neither in popular language nor in specialized terminology[18] can I find any expression for it.

This ecstasy, to the taste of which[19] I was brought by your request, is one of a number of stages in the progress of the devotee,[20] as reported by Avicenna: "Then, when his training and willpower reach a certain point, glimmerings of the light of Truth[21] will flicker before him, thrilling him like lightning, flashing and going out. If he is diligent in his ascetic practice, these spells grow more and more frequent, until they come unasked, en-trancing him without the use of exercises. No matter what he sees, he will turn from it to the Sacred Presence, reminded of some aspect of the Divine, and again he will be overwhelmed. Thus he
7 begins to see the Truth in everything.[22] Finally his efforts bring him to a stage where his moment of recognition turns to tranquil contemplation; his stolen glimpses, familiarity; his spark, a limpid flame. He has gained an understanding[23] as unshakable as that of an old friendship."[24]

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Avicenna goes on to describe the gradual progress[25] of the devotee, culminating as "his inmost being becomes a polished mirror facing toward the truth. Sublime delight pours over him and he rejoices in his soul at all the marks it bears of Truth.[26] At this level he sees both himself and the Truth. He still hesitates between them; but then, becoming oblivious to self, he is aware only of the Sacred Presence—or if he is at all aware of himself, it is only as one who gazes on the Truth. At this point communion is achieved."

Now these states, as Avicenna describes them, are reached not by theorizing, syllogistic deductions, postulating premisses and drawing inferences, but solely by intuition.[27] If you wish an analogy to make clear the difference between this sort of apprehension and all others, imagine a child, growing up in a certain city, born blind, but otherwise intelligent and well endowed,[28] with a sound memory and an apt mind. Through his remaining channels of perception he will get to know the people as well as all sorts of animals and objects, and the streets and alleys, houses and markets—eventually well enough to walk through the city without a guide, recognizing at once everyone he meets. But colors, and colors alone, he will know only by descriptive explanations and ostensive definitions.[29] Suppose after he had come this far, his eyesight were restored and he could see. He would walk all through the town finding nothing in contradiction to what he had believed, nor would anything look wrong to him. The colors he encountered would conform to the guidelines that had been sketched out for him. Still there would be two great changes, the second dependent on the first: first the daybreak on a new visual world, and second, his great joy.[30]

8

Those who merely think and have not reached the level of love[31] are like the blind. The colors, at that stage known only by accounts of their names, are those experiences which Ibn Bājja said are "too splendid to arise in the physical world", which "God grants to those of his worshippers whom He chooses." But to those who reach love, God grants what I purely metaphorically call another faculty. This corresponds to the restoration of sight. And some-

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times, rarely, there comes a man whose eyes, as it were, are always open, whose glance is always piercing, who does not need to search.[32]

When I speak of the rationalists' method—God raise you to the level of love!—I do not confine myself to their knowledge of the physical world, any more than I confine myself to the metaphysical when I speak of intuition. The two modes of apprehension are quite distinct and are not to be confused, but what I mean by the rationalist's apprehension includes his understanding of the metaphysical—for example, that of Ibn Bājja. It is a necessary condition of what is reached by pure reason that it be true and valid. Thus the difference between the rationalist and those who enjoy intimacy is that while both are concerned with the self-same things, the latter enjoy a clearer view and far greater delight.

10 Ibn Bājja censured them for the pursuit of this joy. He claimed it was a product of their imagination and even promised a clear and distinct description of just how ecstasy ought to be enjoyed. Here is the answer he deserves: 'Do not declare too sweet fruits you have not tasted, and do not trample on the necks of the saintly.'[33] The man did not, in fact, keep his promise or any such thing. What prevented him, perhaps, was that, as he himself says, he was pressed for time with the trouble of getting down to Oran. Or perhaps he felt that describing this state would force him to say something derogatory to his own way of life or at odds with his encouragement of amassing wealth and of the use of various artful dodges to acquire it. But I digress.

It seems clear now that your request must fall within either one or the other of these two objectives: You may be asking what is actually seen by those who undergo the experience and reach intimacy. If so, this is something which
11 cannot be put into a book.[34] Whenever anyone tries to entrust it to words or to the written page its essence is distorted and it slips into that other, purely theoretical branch of discourse. For, clothed in letters and sounds and brought into the perceptible world, it cannot remain, in any way, what it was. Accounts of it, thus, differ widely. Many stray into error by trying to describe it, yet presume others

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to have strayed who never left the path. All this is because it is something vast, infinite—encompassing, but unencompassed.[35]

But on the other hand you may desire a discursive, intellectualized introduction to this experience. And this—God honor you with His intimacy—is something that can be put into words and set down in books. But it is rarer than red sulfur,[36] especially in our part of the world.[37] For the experience is so arcane that only one lone individual and then another[38] can master the most trifling part of it. And even those who do win some bit of it, speak of it publicly only in riddles, because our true, orthodox and established faith guards against a hasty plunge into such things.

Do not suppose the philosophy which has reached us in the books of Aristotle and Fārābī or in Avicenna's *Healing*[39] 12
will satisfy you if this is what you need, or that any Andalusian has written anything adequate on this subject. The reason is that before the spread of philosophy and formal logic to the West all native Andalusians of any ability devoted their lives to mathematics. They achieved a high level in that field but could do no more. The next generation surpassed them in that they knew a little logic. But study logic as they may, they could not find in it the way to fulfillment. It was one of them who wrote:

> How can it be that life's so small.
> Two sciences we have—that's all.
> One is truth beyond attaining;
> The other vain and not worth gaining.[40]

This generation was succeeded by a third, better thinkers and closer to the truth. Of these none had a sharper mind, a sounder method, or truer views than Ibn Bājja. But he was so preoccupied with material success that death carried him off before his intellectual storehouses could be cleared and all his hidden wisdom made known. Most of his ex- 13
tant books are unfinished and break off abruptly before the end like his *De Anima*, his *Discipline of the Solitary*, and his writings on logic and natural science. His only completed works, in fact, are outlines and hasty essays. He

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himself admits this when he says that the argument for the idea he was trying to convey in his *Essay on Communion with the Divine* was put into clear language only with painful difficulty, that in places the organization is weak, and that if he'd had more time, he'd have liked to have rewritten it. This is as much as I can find out about the man, since I never knew him personally.[41]

As for those of his contemporaries allegedly on a par with him, I have seen none of their works. Their successors, however, our own contemporaries, are as yet at a developmental stage, or else their development has halted prematurely—unless there are some of whom I don't yet have a full report.[42]

Those of Fārābī's books that have reached us are for the most part on logic, and those on philosophy are full of doubts.[43] In *The Ideal Religion* he affirms that the souls of the wicked live on forever in infinite torments after death. But in his *Civil Politics* he says plainly that they dissolve
14 into nothing and that only the perfected souls of the good achieve immortality. Finally in his commentary on Aristotle's *Ethics*, discussing human happiness, he says that it exists only in this life, and on the heels of that has words to the effect that all other claims are senseless ravings and old wives' tales.[44] This makes mankind at large despair of God's mercy. It puts the wicked on the same level with the good, for it makes nothingness the ultimate destiny of us all. This is an unspeakable lapse, an unforgivable fall. This on top of his mis-belief, openly avowed, that prophecy belongs properly to the imagination,[45] and his preference of philosophy to revelation—and many more failings which I pass over.

As for the works of Aristotle, Avicenna undertook an exposition of their contents, in accordance with Aristotelian thinking, and he followed Aristotle's philosophical approach in his own *Healing*. But at the start of the book he admits that the truth for him is something quite different; this book was written in the manner of the Peripatetics, but if you want the truth without obfuscation you must study his writ-
15 ings on oriental philosophy. If you take the trouble to plough through the *Healing* and the Aristotelian corpus,

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you will find that on most subjects they agree, although there are some things in the *Healing* that don't come down to us in Aristotle. But if you take everything in Aristotle and the literal reading of the *Healing* (without grasping its subtle, inner meaning) you will end up, as Avicenna warns, far from perfection.

Even Ghazālī's works, because he preached to the masses, bind in one place and loose in another. First he says a thing is rank faithlessness, then he says it's permissible.[46] One ground on which he charges the philosophers with unbelief in *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*[47] is their denial of the resurrection of the flesh and their assertion that only souls are meted out rewards and punishment. But at the beginning of *A Scale of Actions*[48] he definitely attributes this belief to the Sūfī masters, while in the *Rescue from Wrong and Discovery of Ecstasy*[49] he says that he accepts the Sūfī teaching although he came to it only after long searching.[50] Much of this sort of inconsistency will be found in his books by anyone who spends long studying them. He even offers some apology for this practice at the end of the *Scale of Actions*, in his tripartite division of ideas into those held in common with the masses, those exhorting all who seek the truth, and those a man keeps to himself and divulges only to people who share his beliefs.[51] Finally he writes "If my words have done no more than to shake you in the faith of your fathers, that would have been reason enough to write them. For he who does not doubt does not look; and he who does not look will not see, but must remain in blindness and confusion." He illustrates the point with this couplet:

> Forget all you've heard and clutch what you see—
> At sunrise what use is Saturn to thee?[52]

Such apothegms were characteristic of his teaching. Most of what he said was in the form of hints and intimations, of value to those who hear them only after they have found the truth by their own insight or to someone innately gifted and primed to understand. Such men need only the subtlest hints.[53]

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17 In his *Gems of the Qur'ān* Ghazālī said that he had written certain esoteric books which contain the unvarnished truth. So far as I know no such book has reached Spain, although some claim that certain books we have received are in fact this hidden corpus. Nothing could be further from the truth. The books in question are *Modes of Awareness* and *The Smoothing, the Breath of Life, and Related Problems.* Granted that these books contain many hints, they still add little to what is disclosed in his better known works. His *Perfect Understanding of the Lovely Names of God,* in fact, has matter far more recondite than these, and Ghazālī himself tells us that this is not an esoteric book—which means that these which we have could not be among them.[54]

One of our contemporaries, basing himself on Ghazālī's statements at the end of *A Lamp for the Lights,* charges him with a crime monstrous enough to cast him into an inescapable pit. After discussing those "veiled by light,"
18 Ghazālī goes on to speak of those who achieve communion with the divine. He says they know this Being as characterized by an attribute which would tend to negate His utter unity. This critic wishes to impute that Ghazālī believed God, the First and the Truth—praised be He and far exalted above the aspersions of the wicked—has some plurality in His being.[55] I have no doubt that our teacher Ghazālī was among those who reached this sublime goal and enjoyed the ultimate bliss. Nonetheless, his esoteric books on mysticism have not reached us.

I myself would not have garnered what truth I have attained, the culmination of my intellectual efforts, without pursuing the arguments of Ghazālī and Avicenna, checking them one against the other, and comparing the result with the views that have sprung up in our era, so fervently admired by self-appointed philosophers, until finally I was able to see the truth for myself, first by thought and theory, and now in my first brief taste of the actual experience. I feel able now to set down a view to be preserved in my name; and because of our close friendship, I want you to be the first to whom I express myself.

Nonetheless, if I tell you of the highest levels I reached

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without first going over the preliminary steps that lead there, it would do you no more good than blind faith[56]—as if you approved not because my arguments warrant acceptance, but because we are friends. I expect better of you than that. I won't be satisfied unless you go higher, for this much can't guarantee salvation, let alone conquering the highest peaks. I want only to bring you along the paths in which I have preceded you and let you swim in the sea I have just crossed, so that it may bear you where it did me and you may undergo the same experience and see with the eyes of your soul all that I have seen. Then you will not need to confine yourself within the limits of my knowledge.[57] *19*

This will demand no small amount of time, free of all other concerns, for devotion to this endeavor. But if you work hard, you'll be glad in the morning of the ground you gained at night.[58] Your efforts will be blessed; you will please your Lord, and He will please you.[59] I shall be at your side as long as you need me, to lead you where you wish to go by the shortest, safest, and most unobstructed route. *20*

To give you a brief glimpse of the road that lies ahead,[60] let me tell you the story of Hayy Ibn Yaqzān, Absāl, and Salāmān, who were given their names by Avicenna himself. For the tale points a moral for all with heart to understand, "a reminder for anyone with a heart or ears to listen and to hear".[61]

* * *

Our forefathers, of blessed memory,[62] tell of a certain equatorial island, lying off the coast of India, where human beings come into being without father or mother.[63] This is possible, they say, because, of all places on earth, that island has the most tempered climate. And because a supernal light streams down on it, it is the most perfectly adapted to accept the human form.[64] This runs counter to the views of most ordinary philosophers and even the greatest natural scientists. They believe the most temperate region of the inhabited world to be the fourth zone,[65] and if *21*

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they say this because they reason that some inadequacy due to the earth prevents settlement on the equatorial belt, then there is some color of truth to their claim that the fourth is the most moderate of the remaining regions. But if, as most of them admit, they refer only to the intense heat of the equator, the notion is an error the contrary of which is easily proved.

For it is a demonstrated principle of physical science that heat is generated only by motion, contact with hot bodies, or radiation of light. The same sciences teach us that the sun itself is not hot and is not to be characterized by any such mixed qualities. Likewise they teach that it is the highly reflective bodies, not the transparent ones, that take up light best; next are opaque, non-reflecting bodies; but transparent bodies with no trace of opacity do not take on light at all. The foregoing point was proved by Avicenna, using an argument which was his original work; his predecessors do not have it. If these premisses are sound, they imply that the sun does not warm earth the way bodies
22 warm each other, by conduction, because in itself the sun is not hot. Nor is the earth warmed by motion since it is stationary and in the same position at sunrise as at sunset, although warming and cooling are apparent at these times. Nor does the sun first warm the air and then the earth by convection. How could it, since we find that when it's hot the air close to the earth is much hotter than that higher up? The only alternative is that the sun warms the earth by radiation of light.

Heat invariably follows light. If focused in a burning-mirror light will even set things on fire. It has been proved with scientific certainty that the sun is spherical, as is the earth, and that the sun is much bigger than the earth. Thus somewhat more than half the earth's surface is perpetually lit by the sun, and of the sector of the earth illuminated at any given moment, the most brilliantly lit por-
23 tion is the center, since it is furthest from the darkness and faces most directly into the sun. Toward the edges the illumination is progressively less, shading into darkness at the periphery. A place is at the center of the circle of light only when those who live there can see the sun, at its ze-

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nith, directly overhead. At this time the heat is as intense as it will get. A place where the sun stays far from the zenith will be very cold; places where it tends to linger at the zenith will be very hot. But astronomy proves that in equatorial regions the sun stands directly overhead only twice a year, when it enters the Ram at the vernal equinox and when it enters the Balances at the autumnal equinox. The rest of the year it declines six months to the north and six to the south. These regions, then, enjoy a uniform cli- 24
mate, neither excessively hot nor excessively cold.

I recognize that this statement demands a fuller explanation than I have provided,[66] but this would not further our purpose. I bring it to your attention solely by way of corroborating the alleged possibility of a man's being engendered in this place without father or mother, since many insist with assurance and conviction that Hayy Ibn Yaqzān was one such person who came into being on that island by spontaneous generation.

Others, however, deny it and relate a different version of his origin, which I shall tell you. They say that opposite this island there is a large island, rich and spacious, and inhabited by people over whom one, a proud and possessive man, was king. Now this king had a sister whom he forbade to marry until he himself should find a fitting match.[67] But she had a kinsman named Aware,[68] and he married her secretly, but lawfully, according to their rite.[69] She soon conceived and bore him a son, but fearing exposure of her secret she took the infant after nursing him,[70] put him in a tightly sealed ark; and, attended by a few trustworthy friends and servants, brought him at nightfall down to the 25
sea, her heart aching with love and fear for her child. She then wished the child farewell and cried "Almighty God, you formed my baby 'when it was nothing, a thing without a name.'[71] You fed him in the darkness of my womb and saw that he was smooth and even[72] and perfectly formed. In fear of that wicked tyrant I entrust[73] him to your care. I beg you shed your bounty upon him. Be with him. Never leave him, most merciful God!" She cast him into the sea.[74]

A powerful current caught the box and brought it that very night to the coast of the other island of which I spoke.

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At that very moment the tide reached a height to which it would not return for another year. It lodged the little ark in a pleasant thicket, thick with shady cover, floored by rich loam, sheltered from wind and rain and veiled from the sun, which "gently slanted off it when it rose and set."[75] The tide then began to ebb, leaving the ark high and dry.
26 Sand drifted up with gusts of the breeze, damming the watercourse into the thicket so the water could not reach it. The nails of the box had been loosened and the boards knocked akilter by the pounding of the surf against them in the thicket. When the baby had gotten very hungry, he began to cry and struggle. The sound of his voice reached a doe; and taking it for the call of her lost fawn,[76] she followed the sound until she came to the ark. She prodded with her hoof and the baby fought from inside until one of the top boards came loose. The doe felt sorry for the infant and nuzzled him tenderly. She gave him her udder and let him drink her own delicious milk. She became his constant nurse, caring for him, raising him and protecting him from harm.

This, according to those who deny spontaneous generation, is the story of his origin.[77] In a moment I shall tell you how he grew up and progressed from one phase to the next until he reached his remarkable goal. But first I should say that those who claim Hayy came into being spontane-
27 ously say that in a pocket of earth on that island, over the years, a mass of clay worked until hot and cold, damp and dry were blended in just the proper way, their strengths perfectly balanced. This fermented mass of clay was quite large, and parts of it were in better equilibrium than others, more suited than the rest for becoming human gametes. The midmost part was the best proportioned and bore the most perfect equivalence to the makeup of a man. The clay labored and churned, and in the viscous mass there formed what looked like bubbles in boiling water.

28 In the very middle formed a tiny bubble divided in half by a delicate membrane and filled by a fine gaseous body, optimally proportioned for what it was to be.[78] With it at that moment joined "the spirit which is God's,"[79] in a bond virtually indissoluble, not only in the purview of the senses,

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but also in that of the mind. For it should be clear that this spirit emanates continuously from God—glory be to Him. It is analogous to the sunlight that constantly floods the earth. Some objects, like transparent air, are not lit by it at all. Others, opaque but not shiny, are lit partially, differing in color according to their different receptivities. Still others, polished bodies such as mirrors, take up light maximally; and if these mirrors have a certain concave form, fires start in them from the concentrated rays of light. The same holds for the spirit which flows eternally from God's word to all that is. Some beings, lacking any aptitude to receive it, show no trace of it. These, corresponding to the air of the analogy, are the lifeless, inanimate objects. Others, that is plant species, show its influence to varying degrees in proportion to their capacities; they are analogous to opaque objects. Still others show its impact greatly; 29
these are animal species, and they correspond to the shiny objects of the analogy. The most reflective body, far outshining all others, is the one that mirrors in itself the image and pattern of the sun. In the same way with animals, the one that best takes on the spirit in himself and is formed and modelled in its pattern is man. There is reference to this in the words of the Prophet—God bless him and grant him peace—"God created Adam in His own image".[80]

If this image grows so strong in a man that its reality eclipses all other forms, the splendor of its light setting afire all it apprehends so that it alone remains, then it is like the mirror reflecting on itself, burning everything else. This happens only to prophets, the blessings of God upon them.[81] But all this will be made clear in due course. Let us return to the story they tell of his creation.

They say, "When this spirit was linked with that chamber all the powers of the latter submitted totally to it, bowing to its sway according to God's command.[82] Then opposite this chamber a second bubble formed, divided into three 30
chambers, separated by thin membranes and joined by tiny ducts. This also was filled by gaseous material, like that which filled the first, only not as fine. In these three sacs, partitioned within one, lodged some of the powers that had subordinated themselves to the spirit, entrusted with its

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preservation and care and with relaying to this first spirit, linked with the first chamber, all their experiences, from the subtlest to the most magnificent. Next to the first, opposite the second, a third bubble formed, filled with its own gaseous matter, denser than either of the others, and with its own set of subordinate faculties, devoted to the protection and sustenance of the spirit.[83]

31 "These chambers, first, second, and third, in the order I have given, were the first to be created in that working mass of clay. Although they all depend on each other, the dependence of the first on the other two is its need for service, but their dependence on the first is the reliance of the led on their leader or the controlled on what controls them. Still the second and third in their own right are masters, not servants, of all the organs formed after them; and the second has a fuller share of rule than the third. The first has the conical shape of a flame, since it is linked to the spirit and burns with the spirit's heat. The dense matter by which it was enclosed took on the same shape; it developed into solid flesh and was in turn covered by a tough protective envelope of skin. The whole organ is what we call the heart.

32 "To survive the heart needed to be fed and maintained to replenish the juices which constantly broke down in the terrific heat. It needed also a sense of what was good and bad for it so it would be drawn to the one and reject the other. The first need was delegated to one organ with powers designed to serve that need, and its second to another. Sensation was in charge of the brain and nutrition of the liver. Each depends on the heart not only because its heat keeps them alive, but also because their specialized powers originate there. Meanwhile ducts and passages were woven between them and the heart, some wider than others, depending on the need. These were the veins and arteries." So, neglecting nothing, they go on to describe the whole anatomy and all the organs, as physiologists describe the formation of a foetus in the womb, up to the termination of the development process when all the parts were fully formed and the embryo was ready to be born.[84]

In accounting for the success of this metamorphosis they

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rely heavily on their mass of fermenting clay and on its suitability to be formed into all the protective membranes and the like which would be needed in the forming of a man.[85]

When the embryo was ready these coverings were 33
sloughed off as if in labor; and the clay, which had already begun to dry, cracked open. His food supply thus vanishing, the newborn infant got hungrier and hungrier and began to cry, whereupon the doe with the lost fawn responded. From this point on both factions[86] give interchangeable versions of his upbringing.

They agree that the doe that cared for him was richly pastured, so she was fat and had plenty of milk, to give the baby the best possible nourishment. She stayed with him, leaving only when necessary to graze. The baby grew so fond of her he would cry if she were late, and then she would come rushing back. There were no beasts of prey on the island.

So the child grew, nourished by its mother-doe's milk, until he was two years old. By then he'd learned to walk; and, having his teeth, he took to following the doe on her foraging expeditions. She treated him gently and tenderly, taking him where fruit trees grew and feeding him the sweet, ripe fruits that fell from them. The hard-shelled ones she cracked between her teeth, or if he wanted to go back for a while to milk she let him.[87] She brought him to 34
water when he was thirsty; and when the sun beat down she shaded him. When he was cold she warmed him, and at nightfall she would bring him back to the spot where she had found him, nestling him to herself among the feathers with which the little ark had been cushioned.

When they went out to forage and came back to rest they were accompanied by a troop of deer that went along to graze and stayed the night near where they slept. Thus the child lived among the deer, imitating their calls so well that eventually his voice and theirs could hardly be distinguished. In the same way he imitated all the bird calls and animal cries he heard with amazing accuracy,[88] but most often he would mimic the calls of the deer for alarm, courtship, summons or defense—for animals have different cries for these different contingencies.[89] The animals were used

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to him and he was used to them, so they were not afraid of each other.

Hayy discovered in himself an aversion toward some things and an attraction to others even after the things
35 themselves were no longer objects of his immediate experience, for their images were fixed in his mind.[90] He observed the animals from this perspective and saw how they were clothed in fur, hair or feathers, how swiftly they could run, how fiercely they could fight, and what apt weapons they had for defense against any attacker—horns, tusks, hooves, spurs and claws. Then he looked back at himself and realized how naked and defenseless he was. He was a weak runner and not a good fighter. When the animals grappled with him for a piece of fruit they usually wrested it from him and got away with it. He could not defend himself or even run away.

Hayy saw the fawns his age sprout horns from nowhere and grow strong and swift. But in himself he could discover no such change. He wondered about this but could not fathom the cause. No maimed or deformed animal he could find was at all like himself. All other animals, he observed, had covered outlets for their bodily wastes—the solid by a
36 tail, the liquid by fur or the like. And the fact that the private parts of an animal were better concealed than his own disturbed him greatly and made him very unhappy.[91]

When he was nearly seven[92] and had finally lost hope of making up the deficiencies which so disturbed him he took some broad leaves from a tree and put them on, front and back. Then out of plaits of palms and grass he made something like a belt about his middle and fastened his leaves to it. But he had hardly worn it at all when the leaves withered and dried and, one by one, fell out.[93] So he had constantly to get new ones and work them in with the old in bundles. This might make it hold up a while longer, but still it lasted only a very short time.

He got some good sticks from a tree, balanced the shafts and sharpened the points. These he would brandish at the animals that menaced him. He could now attack the weaker ones and hold his own against the stronger. His self-
37 esteem rose a bit as he observed how superior his hands

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were to those of an animal. They enabled him to cover his nakedness and to make sticks for self-defense, so he no longer needed natural weapons or the tail he had longed for.

All the while, he was growing, and soon he was seven. The chore of getting new leaves to cover himself was taking too long, and he had an urge to get the tail of some dead animal and fasten that on instead. But he had noticed that the living wildlife shunned the bodies of the dead and fled from them. So he could not go ahead with his plan, until one day he came upon a dead eagle. Seeing that the animals had no aversion to it, he snatched the opportunity to put his idea into effect. Boldly taking hold of the eagle, Hayy cut off the wings and tail just as they were, all in one piece. He stretched out the wings and smoothed down the feathers, stripped off the remaining skin and split it in half, tying it about his middle, hanging down, half in front and half behind. The tail, he threw across his back; and he fastened the wings to his arms. Thus he got a fine covering that not only kept him warm but also so terrified the animals that not one of them would fight with him or get in his way.[94] In fact, none would come near him except the doe that had nursed and raised him.

She was inseparable from him and he from her. When she grew old and weak he would lead her to rich pastures and gather sweet fruits to feed her. Even so, weakness and emaciation gradually tightened their hold, and finally death overtook her. All her movements and bodily functions came to a standstill. When the boy saw her in such a state, he was beside himself with grief. His soul seemed to overflow with sorrow. He tried to call her with the call she always answered, shouted as loud as he could, but saw not the faintest flicker of life.[95] He peered into her eyes and ears, but no damage was apparent. In the same way he examined all her parts but could find nothing wrong with any of them.[96] He hoped to discover the place where she was hurt so he could take away the hurt and allow her to recover—but he could not even make a start; he was powerless.

What made him think there was something he could

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"take away" was his own past experience. He knew that when he shut his eyes or covered them, he saw nothing until
39 the obstruction was removed; if he stopped his ears with his fingers he could not hear until the obstacle was gone; and if he held his nose he would smell nothing until the passageway was clear again.

These observations led him to believe that not only his senses, but every one of his other bodily functions was liable to obstructions that might block its work. When the block was removed it would return to its normal functioning.[97] But when he had examined all her external organs and found no visible wound or damage, considering meanwhile that her inactivity was not confined to one part but spread throughout the body, it dawned on him that the hurt must be in some organ unseen within the body, without which none of the external parts could function. When that organ had been hurt, the harm was general. No part of the body could carry on its work. Hayy hoped that if he could find that organ and remove whatever had lodged in it, it would revert to normal, its benefits would once more flow to the rest of the body and all the bodily functions would resume.

He had observed in the past that the parts of animals'
40 dead bodies were solid, having no hollows except those of the head, chest and abdomen. He felt certain that the vital organ he was looking for must occupy one of these three cavities, and it seemed to him most likely by far that it be in the central of the three.[98] Surely it had to be centrally located, since all the other organs were equally dependent on it. Besides, in his own case, he could feel what must be such an organ in his breast.[99] He could restrict the action of his other organs—hands, feet, eyes, nose, and ears; he could lose these parts and conceivably get along without them. Conceivably he could get along without his head.[100] But when he thought of whatever it was he could feel in his breast he could not conceive of living for an instant without it. For this reason, in fact, when fighting with animals, he had always been especially careful to protect his breast from
41 their horns—because he could feel that there was something there.

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Certain that the organ where the hurt had settled must be in her breast, he decided to search for and examine it. Perhaps he would be able to get hold of the hurt and remove it. Still he was afraid this very operation might be worse than the original damage. His efforts might do more harm than good. He tried to think whether he had ever seen any animal recover from such a state; and, unable to do so, he lost hope of her getting better unless he did something. But there remained some hope of her recovery if he could find the critical organ and take away the hurt. So he decided to cut open her breast and find out what was inside.

He took chips of stone and dry splinters of wood, sharp as knives, and split her open between the ribs.[101] Cutting through the flesh, he reached the diaphragm. When he saw how tough it was he was certain that this covering must belong to some such organ as he was searching for. If he looked beneath he was sure to find it. Hayy tried to cut *42*
through it, but this was difficult, since he had no tools but only stones and sticks.

He made fresh instruments and sharpened them. Then, cutting very carefully, he pierced the diaphragm and reached a lung. He supposed at first that this was what he was looking for and turned it round and round to see where it was impaired. What he found at first was only one lung, and when he saw that it was to one side (while the organ he was looking for, he was convinced, must be centered in the body's girth as well as in its length) he went on exploring the mid-chest cavity until he found the heart, wrapped in an extremely tough envelope and bound by the strongest ligaments, cushioned in the lung on the side where he had entered. He said to himself, "If this organ has the same structures on the other side as it does here, then it really is directly in the center and it must be the organ I'm looking for—especially since its position is so good, and it is so beautifully formed, so sturdy and compact, and better protected than any other organ I have seen."

He probed on the other side and there too found the dia- *43*
phragm and the other lung, just as before. Now he was

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sure this was the central organ he wanted. He tried to split or cut its protective pericardial cover; and finally with a tremendous effort he was able to lay the heart bare.

On all sides it seemed firm and sound. He looked for any visible damage and found none. Squeezing it in his hand, he discovered it was hollow and thought, perhaps what I actually want is inside this organ and I have not yet reached it. He cut open the heart and inside found two chambers, a left and a right. The right ventricle was clogged with a thick clot of blood, but the left was empty and clear.

"What I'm looking for," he said to himself, "must live in one of these two chambers. In this one on the right I see nothing but clotted blood—which cannot have congealed until the whole body got the way it is—" for he had observed how blood thickens and clots when it flows out of
44 the body, and this was simply ordinary blood, "I see that blood is found in all the organs, not confined to one as opposed to others. But what I've been looking for all along is something uniquely related to this special position and something I know I could not live without for the batting of an eye. Blood I have often lost in quantity fighting with the animals, but it never hurt me; I never lost any of my faculties. What I'm looking for is not in this chamber. But the left one has nothing in it; I can see that it is empty. I cannot believe it serves no purpose, since I have seen that every organ exists to carry out some specific function. How could this chamber, with its commanding position, have none? I can only believe that what I was searching for was here but left, leaving the chamber empty and the body without sensation or motion, completely unable to function."

Realizing that whatever had lived in that chamber had left while its house was intact, before it had been ruined, Hayy saw that it was hardly likely to return after all the
45 cutting and destruction. The body now seemed something low and worthless compared to the being he was convinced had lived in it for a time and then departed.

Hayy turned the focus of his thoughts on that being.[102] What was it? What was its manner of existence? What had bound it to this body? Where had it gone, and how

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had it gotten out? What drove it away if it was forced to leave; or, if it left of its own free choice, what made it so loathe the body? His mind was filled with these questions. He soon dropped the body and thought no more of it, knowing that the mother who had nursed him and showed him so much kindness could only be that being which had departed. From that—and not from this lifeless body—all those actions had issued. The whole body was simply a tool of this being, like the stick with which he fought the animals.[103] His affection was transferred now from the body to the being that was its master and mover. All his love was directed toward that.

Meanwhile the body began to decay and give off dread- *46*
ful odors, increasing his revulsion for it. He longed not to have to look at it. Not long afterwards he noticed two ravens fighting. They fought until one struck the other dead, whereupon it scratched a hole in the earth and buried the dead one. Hayy said to himself, "It surely was good of this bird to bury the other, although it was wrong to kill him. I ought to do the same for my mother."[104] So he dug a hole, threw in his mother's body, heaped earth upon it, and went back to thinking of what controls the body.

He had no idea what it was; but he observed that each individual deer had the same form and figure as his mother. In all probability each of them was moved and governed by something like what had once given motion and direction to his mother. He was friendly to the deer, treating them more kindly for their likeness to his mother.

He lived thus for a time, studying animals and plants and *47*
roaming along the island shore in search of some being like himself, since he saw that every animal and plant had many others like it. But he found none.[105] Seeing that the sea completely surrounded the island, Hayy believed that his island was the only land there was.[106]

A fire broke out one day by friction in a bed of reeds. When Hayy first saw it the sight terrified him. He had never seen anything like it.[107] For some time he stood staring at it, gradually moving nearer and nearer, awestruck by its piercing light and the way it attacked, overwhelmed, and turned to flame everything it touched. Carried away by his

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amazement, and by the courage, not to say audacity, God had compounded with his nature, Hayy reached out and tried to grasp a piece of it. But when he touched it it burnt his hand, and he could not hold on to it. Then he got the
48 idea of taking a brand that was not wholly on fire. He picked it up by the end that wasn't burning, leaving the fire at the other end. This he could manage with ease, so he took it home—for he had moved into a cave, which seemed to him a fine place to live.

He kept the fire up with dry grass and a good supply of firewood, tending it day and night because it seemed such a wonderful thing. He liked it best at night when it took the place of the sun, giving warmth and light. It meant so much to him he fell in love with it and was convinced that of all the things he had, this was the best. Seeing how it always moved upwards, as though trying to rise, he supposed it must be one of those jewel-substances he saw shining in the sky.

Hayy tested the power of fire on everything by throwing things in and watching how quickly or slowly it overwhelmed them, depending on the combustibility of the material.[108] One thing he threw in, purely to experiment with
49 its propensity to burn, was a fish that had been cast up on the beach by the sea. As it began to roast and the savory odors spread, his appetite was aroused. He nibbled it and liked it. In this way he learned to eat meat and practiced hunting and fishing until he became quite skilled in both. He liked fire even more now that it brought him good things to eat he had never had before.

His new infatuation with fire, based on its power and all its beneficial effects, gave him the notion that what had abandoned his doe-mother's heart was of the same or similar substance. This supposition was reinforced by his observation that body heat in animals was constant as long as they were alive, but that they grew cold after death. Besides he felt quite a bit of heat in his own breast, just at the spot where he had cut into the doe. It occurred to him that if he took a live animal, cut open the heart and inspected the same chamber he had found empty in the doe, he would find the ventricle of a living animal still occupied by what-

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ever had lived in it, and so determine whether it was of the same substance as fire, whether it had any heat or light or not.[109] 50

He got hold of a beast, tied it down and cut it open, as he had the doe, and reached the heart. This time he started on the left. Cutting into the heart, he saw the chamber, filled with a steamy gas, like white mist. He poked in his finger—it was so hot it nearly burnt him, and the animal died instantly. This satisfied him that the hot vapor was what imparted animation to the animal and that every animal has something corresponding: When this departs, the animal dies.

A desire was aroused in him to study all the other animal organs, their organization, placement, number, and interdependence, how the heat of that steam reaches them, giving life to them all, how it lasts as long as it does, where it comes from, and why its heat does not dissipate.

He followed this up by dissecting and vivisecting many animals, constantly learning and improving the quality of his mind until he had reached the level of the finest natural scientists. 51

By this time it was plain to him that each animal, although many in respect of its parts, its various senses and types of motion, was nonetheless one in terms of that spirit which stems from a single fixed place and diffuses from there to all the organs.[110] All parts of the body are simply its servants or agents. The spirit employed the body much as he himself employed the tools with which he fought, hunted, or dissected. His weapons could be classified as offensive and defensive. His hunting gear could be divided into those implements appropriate to land animals and those for fish. Similarly his dissecting tools could be classified as those suitable for cutting, breaking, or boring. The same body handled all these tools, using each appropriately for its own purpose.[111]

In the same way the one vital spirit uses the eye as a tool for seeing, the ear for hearing, the nose for smelling, the tongue for tasting, the skin and flesh for feeling, the limbs for moving, the liver for feeding and digestion. Every one of these organs is at the service of the spirit and would 52

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be deprived of its functions were it not directed by this spirit through what we call the nerves: for when nerve pathways are cut or blocked, the functions lapse in the organ to which they lead.[112] These nerves do no more than transmit the animal spirit emanating from the brain, which in turn derives it from the heart. The brain has in it a great many spirits, since it is highly compartmentalized.[113] If for some reason any organ does not receive this spirit, like a useless, discarded tool, it can work no longer. And should the vital spirit leave the body altogether or in one way or another disintegrate or become extinct, the whole body is stilled and dies.[114]

This type of thinking had brought him to this point when
53 he had completed three sets of seven, that is when he was twenty-one. By this time he had grown quite ingenious. He dressed in skins from his dissected animals. From these he also made shoes. He got thread from animal hair, hemp, and the pith of reeds and cattail stalks and other fibrous plants. The original idea of making thread came from his initial use of the tall grass. He made awls of tough thorns or splinters of reed sharpened on a stone. By watching swallows he got the idea of building himself a storehouse for surplus food, secured by a door of cane sticks tied together, against the intrusion of animals while he was away.
54 He trained some birds of prey to help with his hunting and kept poultry from which he got eggs and chicken. He made some semblance of spearpoints from the horns of wild cows and mounted them on sturdy lengths of cane or beechwood shafts. After hardening in fire and sharpening with chips of rock, they were as good as real spears. He also made a shield out of several plies of hide. This was due to his realization that despite his lack of natural weapons, he could manufacture everything he wanted to make up the lack.[115]

Seeing that no animal would stand and fight with him, but all ran away and wore him out with running, he tried to think of some ingenious method of catching them, and came to the conclusion that the plan most likely to succeed was to gain the confidence of one of the swifter beasts and feed it well so as to be able to ride it in pursuit of other animals. There were wild horses on the island as well as

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wild asses. Hayy found some that were suitable and trained them as he had planned. Then out of thongs and rawhide he contrived saddles and bridles. So, as he had hoped, he 55
was able to chase animals he had found difficult to catch.

He accomplished all these things during the time when he was still engrossed with dissection and his one great passion was to understand the differentiation and the characteristic functions of all animal organs, that is within the period I have sketched, ending with his twenty-first year. At this point he took up another tack.

Hayy considered all objects in the world of generation and decay—the various species of plants and animals, minerals, and every sort of rock and soil, water, water-vapor, and ice, snow, sleet, smoke, flame and burning embers. He saw that these had among them many different attributes with conflicting effects. They moved, some in the same direction, some in opposite directions from each other. Hayy saw that while physical things differed in some respects they were alike in others and after some study and 56
thought, he concluded that inasmuch as things differ they are many, but inasmuch as they correspond they are one.[116]

At times he would concentrate on the peculiarities which differentiate things from each other, and then things seemed to be manifold and beyond number. Being seemed to proliferate into an unmarshallable array. Even his own identity seemed complex and multiform, because he was viewing it in the perspective of the diversity of his organs and the specialization of each by its own specific capacity to perform its own specific task. Each organ, moreover, was itself divisible into a great many parts. So he judged that he himself was many and so was everything else.

But looking at it from the opposite point of view, he realized that, no matter how many parts he had, all were connected and contiguous. Thus they could be said to be one. They differed only in having different functions, and this was due solely to the disposition each received from the animal spirit, to the discovery of which his earlier thoughts had led him. This spirit itself was one, and it was this which was his real self, all other organs serving as its tools. He thus established for himself that he himself was one.

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Shifting his attention to animals in general, Hayy found
57 that each individual was one in this respect. He then considered whole species at a time—deer, horses, asses, the different species of birds. He observed the likeness among individual members of each species in internal and external organs, modes of perception, motion and appetite. What differences he could find were negligible,[117] compared to all the points of congruity. Hayy reasoned that the spirit present throughout the species must be a single entity, undifferentiated except through its division among numerous hearts. If somehow what was divided among all those hearts could be collected in one great vessel, then it would be one thing, like one quantity of water or juice divided into different bowls and then collected again.[118] Together or separate, the identity is the same. Plurality is predictable of it only from a certain point of view. Hayy thus saw whole species as one in this respect, likening the plurality of individuals to the plurality of each individual's parts, which are not really many.

58 Next Hayy mentally combined all animal species for consideration together. He saw that they were alike in having sensation, nutrition, and voluntary motion in whichever direction they pleased. These activities, he had learned already, were characteristic of the animal spirit; whereas the respects in which they differed, were not particularly essential to the animal spirit. These reflections made it apparent to him that the vital spirit in all animal genera is in reality one being, despite the slight differences that differentiate one species from another. Just as water from a single source may be divided into different bowls, and may be cooler in some than in others, so the animal spirit is one; its specific differentia are like the different temperatures of the water, while the animal itself is like the water, which remains one even though it happens to be divided. By thinking in this way Hayy was able to see the whole animal kingdom as one being.[119]

59 He turned his mind to the various plant species, observing the likeness of all their members in leaf, branch, flower, and fruit, and all the plant functions. By analogy with animals he saw that, parallel to the animal spirit, plants too must

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have a single substance in which all partake, and which makes them all one being. Likewise, considering the plant kingdom at large, he judged it must be one because of the universality of growth and nutrition. At this he joined plants and animals together in his mind, since they were alike in nutrition and growth, although the animals are higher than the plants in that they possess sense perception, locomotion, and sensation as well. Still plants seemed to have something roughly similar, as, for example, when flowers turn toward the sun, or roots towards food.[120] These considerations showed him that plants and animals are united by a single common entity, more perfectly represented in one and somehow impeded in the other. It was as if water were divided, part running freely and part frozen over. Thus he saw how animals and plants are one being.

Next he investigated bodies that do not sense or feed or *60*
grow such as stones, earth, water, air, and flame. He saw that these bodies are bounded in length, breadth, and depth, the sole differences among them being in terms of such contrarieties as that some were colored and others colorless; some hot, others cold. He perceived that warm bodies grow cold and cold ones hot; he watched water turn to steam, steam to water; burning things to embers, ashes, flame and smoke. When rising smoke was trapped in a hollow, it precipitated and in its place appeared bits of solid, rather like earth. This line of thinking, similar to the reasoning he had done on animals and plants, made evident to him that all physical things, despite the involvement of diversity in some respects, are one in reality.[121]

He then turned to that entity which in his belief united plants and animals. It had to be a body with length, breadth and depth and, like any ordinary body that does not feed or perceive, either hot or cold. The only differences between this archetypal living being and any inanimate objects, in fact, were the life functions it manifested through the use of "tools" in animals and plants. But perhaps these functions were not properly theirs, but came in from some other being. And if they came to other objects, *61*
perhaps these too would come to life! Hayy wondered what he himself might be, stripped of all the functions

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which seemed at first glance to emanate from himself, and realized that he was no more than another body. These thoughts, then, brought him to the conclusion that all bodies —whether they are animate or inanimate—are one thing, although some exhibit certain special functions, which they implement by organs. But he did not know whether these activities were strictly speaking their own or had come from something else—for at this stage the only beings he knew were physical.[122]

In this way Hayy saw all being as one, although it had appeared at first glance boundless and without number. For some time he rested content at this stage.

But then he began to wonder about all these physical things, both living and non-living, which seemed sometimes to be one, sometimes to be infinite in number and diversity. He observed that all must either rise like smoke, flame, and air under water, or fall like water, particles of earth, and
62 parts of plants and animals.[123] All such bodies must move in either one direction or the other and not come to rest unless stopped by something, as when a falling rock hits hard ground and cannot break through—for if it could, it would obviously have gone on falling: Thus you can feel it tugging downward against you if you try to lift it. In the same way Hayy found that smoke would not stop rising unless trapped; and even then it would curl around, left and right, and if there were an air passage, escape and continue rising, since air could not contain it. Hayy observed that if he filled a skin with air, tied it shut and pushed it under water it would try to wriggle free and rise until taken out and restored to air. Then it would stop wriggling upwards and lie quite still.

Hayy tried to find some body that neither rose nor fell
63 or exerted no pull in either direction, but among the objects with which he was familiar he could find nothing of the kind.[124] He sought such an object purely in the hope of finding out what it was to be a body as such, free of all the qualities that give rise to plurality. After he had worn himself out looking, studying all the objects that bore the fewest predicates without finding one that could not be said to be either 'heavy' or 'light' as we express it, he began to

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investigate heaviness and lightness themselves. Did they belong to bodies *qua* body, or did both arise from something distinct from the physical?

It seemed plain to him that both must stem from some separate principle, for if they belonged to body in virtue of its being body, then every material object would have both.[125] In fact, however, we know that heavy objects have no buoyancy, and light ones no gravity; yet they remain bodies all the same. Thus over and above physicality each has its own differentiating factor. If not for this added factor, the two would be identical. Clearly the substantiality of objects both heavy and light was compounded of two factors, the physicality they have in common, and linked with it either gravity or buoyancy—that is what moves them either upwards or downwards and makes them different. 64

Regarding all bodies, living and non-living in the same light, Hayy saw that the being of each of them was made up in the same way of corporeality plus some factor or factors. Before him loomed the forms of physical things in all their diversity. This was his first glimpse of the spiritual world. For these forms cannot be apprehended by the senses, but only by reasoning.[126] And as he was awakening to these things, it dawned on him that the animal spirit, which lives in the heart and at which he had first probed with his dissections, must itself have a principle over and above its corporeality which would enable it to carry out all its wonderful tasks, as true subject of the various modes of sensing, apprehending and moving.[127] This is the form which differentiates it from all other bodies. Philosophers term it the animal soul. 65

The same holds for plants: whatever they have to fill the role of body-heat in animals would have its own special form, called by philosophers the vegetative soul. And even inanimate objects—that is all things in the world of generation and decay besides plants and animals—must have some special thing to make them behave in their own peculiar way, and give them their particular qualities to the senses and their ways of moving. This is the form, or as philosophers call it, the nature of the thing.

When Hayy understood, through this line of reasoning,

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that the substance of the animal spirit, toward which all his love had been directed, was compounded out of the corporeal factor and another, non-physical factor, and that it had the former in common with every other body, while the latter, linked with it, belonged exclusively to this spirit, he felt contempt for physicality. He dropped the physical and his mind fastened on the other factor, which is called simply the soul.

66

He was now anxious to learn all he could about the soul. Turning his thought in this direction, he started off by going over in his mind all physical objects, considered not as bodies but as having forms from which emerge their distinguishing characteristics. Following this up in many specific cases, he was able to see how a great number of bodies participate in a certain form, from which emanates a given mode or given modes of behavior. Within this group a subclass, besides sharing the form of the rest, has an additional form from which further functions emerge. A still smaller class displays both of these plus a third form, generating still more special behavior.

For example, everything earthen, such as soil, rocks, minerals, plants, animals, and all other heavy objects, makes up a single totality which participates in a single form from

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which issues the tendency to fall when unimpeded or when lifted and let go. Plants and animals are a subclass of this group, but besides sharing this form with all the rest, they have an added form from which emanate the activities of nutrition and growth. Nutrition is an interchange by which the being nourished replaces matter that breaks down by ingesting material similar to itself and assimilating this to its own substance. Growth is movement in all three dimensions at once, according to a set proportion. These two functions are universal among plants and animals and must therefore issue from a form shared by both plants and animals. This form is what is called the vegetative soul. A

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still smaller subdivision, namely the animals, while sharing the first form with the whole group and the second with the subclass, surpasses both by the exclusive possession of a third form which gives rise to sensation and locomotion.

Further, Hayy knew that every animal species had its

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own distinguishing characteristics. He now understood that this differentiating principle stemmed from the species' own distinctive form, superadded to the form it held in common with all other animals. Each plant species had something similar.

Plainly some of the objects of sense perception in the world of generation and decay were made up of many factors over and above physicality, while others had only a few. He recognized that it would be easier to grasp the simpler than the more complex, so he decided, to start with, to try to understand whatever had the fewest components to its make-up. Seeing that plants and animals must be composed of numerous factors because of the complexity of the tasks of life, he put off consideration of their forms *69*
for the present. By the same token he observed that some pieces of earth were simpler than others, so he directed his attention to the simplest of these he could obtain. Likewise he recognized that water must be very simple since so few activities issue from its form. The same was true of fire and air.

At first he had supposed not only that these four, fire, water, earth, and air, were interchangeable but also that all partook of one common entity, that is materiality, which was itself necessarily devoid of the factors which differentiate the four.[128] This must neither rise nor fall; it must be neither hot nor cold, moist nor dry. For all these predicates are inapplicable to body *qua* body, since none is applicable to all bodies. Therefore if an object could exist which had no form beyond physicality, not one of these predicates would be true of it, and no predicate at all could apply to it which did not apply to all physical things, regardless of their form.

He searched for some one characteristic common to all objects, animate and inanimate, but the only thing he could *70*
find in all physical objects was extension in three dimensions. This he recognized belonged to physical things purely by virtue of the fact that they were physical. But his senses did not so readily reveal any object with just this attribute of extension and no other.

He then examined this notion of extension, asking him-

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self whether it was just this that belonged to material things or whether there was not perhaps, some further principle; and he realized that behind extension there must be another factor in which extension itself was grounded. For bare extension could no more subsist by itself than the extended object could exist without extension. Hayy tried out this idea on several form-bearing objects such as clay
71 for example. He found that if he molded clay into some shape, for example into a ball, it had length, width and depth in a certain ratio; if he then took this ball and worked it into a cube or egg shape, its length, width and depth took on different proportions. But it was still the same clay; and, no matter what the ratio, it could not be divested of length, breadth, and depth. The fact that one proportion could replace another made it apparent to him that the dimensions were a factor in their own right, distinct from the clay itself. But the fact that the clay was never totally devoid of dimensions made it plain to him that they were part of its being.

His experiment suggested to him that bodies, *qua* body, are really composed of two factors, one analogous to the clay of the example, the other to the length, width, and depth of the ball or block or other figure the clay might have. The truth was, he could not comprehend physical things at all unless he conceived of them as compounded of these two factors, neither of which can subsist without the
72 other.

The variable factor, which can present a succession of many different faces, that is extension, corresponds to the form of all other bodies. The other factor, which remains constant like the clay of the example,[129] corresponds to materiality in all other bodies. In philosophy the factor analogous to the clay is called *hyle*, or matter. It is entirely devoid of forms.

When his thinking had risen to this level and the sensory world had been left behind to some extent, just as he was mounting to a height from which he could gaze out toward the approaches of the world of mind, Hayy felt alien and alone. He longed for the familiar world of the senses, balked at the notion of unqualified body, a thing he could

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neither perceive nor possess, and fell back on the simplest objects he could see, the four he had already singled out.[130]

He examined water first and found that if left to itself, determined only by its own form, it was perceptibly cold and downward-seeking; but if warmed by fire or the heat of the sun, first its coldness would pass, leaving only its proclivity to fall; then, if it were heated strongly, this too 73
would vanish, and it would seek to rise, leaving it without either of the characteristics which had sprung from its form. Yet all he knew of that form was that these functions issued from it. When they were gone the rule of that form must have ended. The form of water must have left this body, since it now exhibited behavior characteristic of some other form. A new form not previously present must have come into being here, giving rise to behavior unlike that it had shown under its original form.

Now Hayy knew by necessity that all that comes into being must have a cause. From this consideration he gained a vague and general notion of the cause of this form. One by one he went over the forms he had known before and saw that all of them had come to be and all must have a cause. He then considered that in which the forms inhere and found it to be no more than a body's propensity for such and such an action to arise from it. Water, for example, has a propensity to rise when strongly heated. This propensity is due to the form, for there is nothing there but 74
body and certain perceptible things—qualities and ways of moving, for example—which come into being, and the cause who creates them. Thus the proneness of a body to certain kinds of motion as opposed to others must be due to its disposition or form.[131]

Hayy realized that the same would be true of all forms. Clearly the acts emerging from forms did not really arise in them, but all the actions attributed to them were brought about through them by another Being. This idea to which he had now awakened is the meaning of the Prophet's words: "I am the ears He hears by and the sight He sees by."[132] As it is written in the unshakable Revelation "It was not you but God who killed them; and when you shot, it was not you who shot, but God."[133]

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Possessing now a broad if indistinct notion of this great Subject, Hayy found in himself a burning desire to know Him more fully. But, having as yet not left the sensory world, he tried first to find this Cause among the objects of his senses. Besides, he did not yet know whether He was one or many. Accordingly he scrutinized all the physical things he knew and to which his thinking had always been confined.

All of them, he perceived, develop and decay. Those which are not destroyed completely are destroyed at least in part. Water and earth, for example, are at least in part destroyed by fire. Air too, he saw, can be destroyed by a
75 severe chill and turn to snow or water. None of the physical things around him was exempt from change, thus none could exist without there being a cause of all this change.[134] Seeing that this was the case Hayy left behind all these things and turned his mind to the heavenly bodies. He reached this level at twenty-eight, having completed four seven-year phases in his development.

He knew that the heavens and all the stars in the skies were bodies because without exception they were extended in three dimensions, and whatever is always extended in three dimensions is a body, therefore they were all bodies.[135] He wondered whether they extended infinitely in all directions or were finite, bounded at some point beyond which no extension was possible. The problem perplexed him more than a little, but ultimately his inborn talent and brilliance led him to realize that an infinite body is something spurious which can neither be nor be conceived. This conclusion was bolstered in his mind by a number of arguments
76 that he reached quite independently in the course of his reflections.

"This heavenly body," he said to himself, "is bounded on the near side, without doubt, since I can see it with my own eyes. Only the far side admits of doubt. Nonetheless I know it is impossible for it to extend forever. For if I imagine two lines beginning on this finite side, passing up through the body to infinity, as far as the body itself supposedly extends, and imagine a large segment cut from the finite end of one and the two placed side by side with the

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cut end of one opposite the uncut end of the other, and my mind travels along the two lines toward the so called infinite end, then I must discover either that the pair of lines really do extend to infinity, the one no shorter than the other, in which case the cut line equals the intact one, which is absurd—or else that the one does not run the full length of the other, but stops short of the full course, in which case it is finite. But if the finite segment that was subtracted is restored, the whole is finite. Now it is neither shorter nor longer than the uncut line. They must be equal then. But one is finite, so the other must be finite as well—and so must the body in which these lines were assumed to be drawn. Such lines can be assumed in any physical thing. Thus to postulate an infinitely extended physical body is fallacious and absurd." 77

Once the exceptional mind which had made him aware of such a remarkable argument[136] had demonstrated to him the finitude of the heavens, Hayy wished to know what shape they had and how they were divided by their limiting surfaces.[137] To start with he watched the sun, moon and other stars, observing how all rose in the east and set in the west. Those which passed directly overhead inscribed a great arc; those inclining north or south from his zenith inscribed a smaller arc. The further they lay from the zenith and the closer to the poles, the smaller the arc they described, the smallest orbits in which stars moved being those of Ursa Minor and Canopus, two little circles about the North and South Poles respectively. 78

Since Hayy's home, as I mentioned at the outset, was on the equator, the orbital planes of all the stars were perpendicular to his horizon and their orbits equally large at a given deflection north and south. What is more, both polar axes were visible to him. He observed that when a star with a large orbit and one with a small one rose together, they also set together; and seeing this repeated constantly with all stars, he realized that the firmament must be spherical. The conviction was strengthened by his seeing the sun, moon and stars return to the east after disappearing in the west, and by the fact that their apparent sizes at rising, peak, and setting were constant. For if their motion fol- 79

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lowed any path other than along a sphere, they would have to be closer to view at some times than at others, and if so their magnitudes or apparent sizes would vary. They would seem bigger when closer than when farther off. But since there was no such variation to be seen, he was certain that their motion was in a spherical course.

He continued to study the motion of the moon, observing that this was from west to east, and he even observed the retrograde motion of the planets.[138] Thus he eventually learned a great deal of astronomy. He now knew that the
80 courses of the stars could be set only in a number of spheres, all enclosed in one great sphere above them all, which moves the whole from east to west in a day and a night. But to explain each step in his progress in astronomy would be a protracted task. And this, after all, is treated at length in books. For our purpose no more is needed than what I have already set down.

Having reached this point, Hayy understood that the heavens and all that is in them are, as it were, one being whose parts are all interconnected. All the bodies he had known before such as earth, water, air, plants and animals were enclosed within this being and never left it. The whole was like an animal.[139] The light-giving stars were its senses. The spheres, articulated one to the next, were its limbs. And the world of generation and decay within was like the juices and wastes in the beast's belly, where smaller animals often breed, as in the macrocosm.

Seeing the whole universe as in reality one great being,
81 and uniting all its many parts in his mind by the same sort of reasoning which had led him to see the oneness of all bodies in the world of generation and decay, Hayy wondered whether all this had come to be from nothing, or in no respect emerged from nothingness but always existed. On this question he had many misgivings. Neither position seemed to prevail.[140] For whenever he assumed the eternity of the universe, numerous difficulties arose due to the fact that any actual infinity could be shown to be impossible by the same sort of reasoning which had shown him the impossibility of an infinite physical body. Besides he knew that the world could not exist without temporal events, thus

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it could not precede them. But what cannot precede temporal events must itself come to be in time.[141]

When, on the other hand, he assumed that the universe arose in time, other objections assailed him. Thus he realized that the notion of the universe coming to be from nothing could be made sense of only in terms of a time before there was a universe—but time itself is an inseparable part of the universe. Therefore it is inconceivable that the origin of the universe came before the origin of time.[142] 82
"Furthermore," he said to himself, "if the universe came to be in time, there must have been some cause to bring it into being.[143] Why did this Cause bring about a world now rather than before? Had some outside force disturbed Him? Nothing existed but He. Had some change, then, occurred within Him? But what brought about *that* change?"[144]

For some years Hayy pondered over this problem, but the arguments always seemed to cancel each other. Neither position could outweigh the other. Baffled and exhausted by this dilemma, he began to wonder what each of the beliefs entailed. Perhaps the implications were the same![145] For he saw that if he assumed that the universe had come to be in time, *ex nihilo*, then the necessary consequence would be that it could not have come into existence by itself, but must have had a Maker to give it being. This Maker could not be perceptible to the senses; for if it could be apprehended by sense perception, then it would be a material body, and thus part of the world, itself in time and in need of a cause. If this second cause were physical, it 83
would need a third; the third, a fourth, and so *ad infinitum* —which is absurd.

Thus the world must have a non-corporeal Cause. Since He is not a physical being there is no way of perceiving Him through the senses, as the five senses can grasp only physical objects and their attributes. But if He cannot be perceived, He cannot be imagined either, since imagining is no more than the mind's projection of images belonging to sense objects no longer present.[146] Furthermore, if He is not a material body, then it is impossible to apply to him any of the predicates of physical things. Chief of these is extension in length, width, and depth. He transcends these

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and all the physical characteristics that follow from them. Finally as Maker of the universe He must know it and have sway over it: "Can it be that the Creator does not know? He is Kindly and Aware."[147]

Alternatively, Hayy saw that if he assumed the eternity of the world, that is that it had always been as it is now[148] and not emerged from non-being, this would imply that its
84 motion too was eternal and had never begun, never started up from rest. Now every motion requires a mover.[149] This mover can be *either* a force distributed through some body —self-moving or externally moved—or a force which is not distributable or diffusible in physical bodies. But the type of force which is diffused and distributed through material things is divided when they divide and augmented proportionately as they increase. Weight, for example, in a stone is what causes its downward motion. If the stone is split in half, so is its weight; and if another is added, equal to the first, the weight increases by an equal amount. If it were possible to keep adding stones forever, then the weight would mount to infinity; but if the stones reached a certain number and stopped, then the weight would reach a corresponding point and stop. Yet it has already been proved that every material body must be finite. So every force in a material body must be finite. Should we discover a force engaged in an infinite task, that force cannot belong to a physical thing. But we have found the motion of the heav-
85 ens to be ceaseless and eternal, for *ex hypothesi* it has gone on forever and had no beginning. *Ergo* the force that moves them must be neither in their own physical structure nor in any external physical being. It can only belong to some Being independent of all material things and indescribable by any predicate applicable to them.

When first reflecting on the world of generation and decay, Hayy had become aware that the substantiality of any material thing rests in its form, that is its propensity for certain types of motion. Its being, on the material side, is defective at best, and in itself scarcely conceivable. If so, the being of the whole universe is ultimately no more than its capacity to be moved by this great Mover, who is free

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of matter and all its attributes and transcends all that sense can perceive or imagination approach. If He brings about the sidereal motions, each in its kind and all without discontinuity, never halting, never tiring, then He must know them all and hold absolute power over them.

So this train of thought brought him exactly where the other had. He was no longer troubled by the dilemmas of 86
creation versus eternity, for either way the existence of a non-corporeal Author of the universe remained unscathed, a Being neither in contact with matter nor cut off from it, neither within nor outside it—for all these terms, 'contact' and 'discontinuity', inside' and 'outside' are merely predicates of the very physical things which He transcends.[150]

Since matter in every body demands a form, as it exists through its form and can have no reality apart from it, and since forms can be brought into being only by this Creator, all being, Hayy saw, is plainly dependent on Him for existence itself. Nothing can subsist except through Him. Thus He is the Cause of all things, and all are His effects, whether they came to be out of nothing or had no beginning in time and were in no way successors to non-being. In either case they are His effects, dependent on Him for their existence, since He is their Cause and Maker. If He did not endure, they would not endure. If He did not exist, they would not exist. If He were not eternal, they could not have been eternal.[151]

But He, in Himself, has no need of them and is utterly independent of them. How could this not be so, when it has been proved that His force and power are infinite, while all physical things and everything connected with them or 87
in the least related to them are truncated and finite? The whole Universe, then, and all that is in it—heaven and earth and all that lies above, beneath and between—is His work 88
and creation, ontologically, if not temporally, posterior to Him.

Suppose you held something in your hand while moving your arm. The object you held would undoubtedly move with your hand, subsequently not in time, but in fact—for in time the two motions are simultaneous.[152] It is in this

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way, out of time, that the universe is caused and created by its Maker "Whose command, when He desires a thing is simply to tell it 'Be!' and it is."[153]

The moment Hayy realized that all that exists is His work, he saw things in a new and different light. It was as an expression of its Maker's power that he saw each thing now, marvelling at His wonderful craftsmanship, the elegance of His plan and ingenuity of His work.[154] In the least of things —not to speak of the greatest—Hayy found marks of wisdom and divine creativity that exhausted his powers of admiration and confirmed his belief that all this could issue only from a Cause of consummate perfection—beyond perfection! "Not an atom's weight escapes Him in heaven or on earth nor anything at all, greater or less."[155]

89 Hayy considered how the Creator had given each sort of animal its makeup and showed how these were to be used —for if He did not teach animals to use their parts for their intended purposes, they would do the animals no more good than if they did not have them.[156] From this Hayy learned that He is most good and merciful. From then on, whenever he saw a being that was good, or beautiful, or strong, or perfect in any way, he would recognize, on considering, that this must be its Maker's work and stem from His overflowing abundance and liberality.[157] Thus he knew that what He Himself possesses must be greater and more perfect, fuller, better, and more lasting out of all proportion, than what He gives. And so, continuing the sequence of perfections, Hayy saw that all belong to Him, proceed from Him, and are more truly predicated of Him than of any other being.

He surveyed the privations and saw that He is clear of them and transcends them all. How could He not transcend privation when the very concept means no more than absolute or relative non-being—and how could non-being be associated or confused with Him Who is pure being, Whose essence is necessary existence, Who gives being to all that 90 is? There is no existence but Him. He is being, perfection, and wholeness. He is goodness, beauty, power, and knowledge. He is He. "All things perish except His face."[158]

By the end of his fifth seven-year span, his awareness had

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brought him to this point. He was thirty-five. By now thought of this Subject was so deeply rooted[159] in his heart that he could think of nothing else. He was distracted from his prior investigation of created being. For now his eye fell on nothing without immediately detecting in it signs of His workmanship—then instantly his thoughts would shift from craft to Craftsman, deepening his love of Him, totally detaching his heart from the sensory world, and binding it to the world of mind.

Having gained an awareness of this eternally existing Being, Whose existence is uncaused, but Who is the cause of all existence, Hayy wished to know how this knowledge had come to him. By what power had he apprehended such a being? He counted off his senses—hearing, sight, smell, taste, and touch. None of these could grasp anything but the physical or the attributes subsisting in it. Hearing catches only sounds which are generated by the vibrating 91
waves of air when bodies strike together.[160] Sight knows only colors; smell, odors; taste, flavors; touch, textures—hard or soft, rough or smooth. Imagination too can apprehend only things with length, breadth, and depth. All these are qualities predicable only of physical things. Only these can be objects of the senses because the senses themselves are powers diffused in material things, and thus divisible with their substrates. The senses, for this reason, can apprehend only divisible objects, that is physical things. For these faculties are spread thoughout a divisible thing and their object must be capable of a corresponding division. Thus any faculty in a physical body can apprehend only physical bodies and their attributes.[161]

But it was already quite clear to Hayy that this necessarily existent Being transcends physical attributes in every respect. The only way to apprehend Him, then, must be by some non-physical means, something which is neither a 92
bodily faculty nor in any way bound up with body—neither inside nor outside, neither in contact with it nor disjoined from it. Hayy had also realized that what had brought him his awareness of this Being would be his true self, and now that his understanding of Him was better, he recognized that this self too, by which he had come to know Him, was

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non-corporeal and not qualifiable by any physical predicate. The whole outward self, the objective, corporeal being he could perceive, was not his true self; his true identity was that by which he had apprehended the Necessarily Existent.

Knowing now that this embodiment, apprehended by the senses and enveloped in the skin was not himself, he thoroughly despised his body and set eagerly to thinking of that higher self by which he had reached an awareness of the sublime Being, Whose existence is necessary.[162]

Was it possible that this other, nobler being, which was himself, could perish—or was it everlasting? Disintegration and decay are, he knew, predicates of physical things indicating simply that they have taken off one form and put on another, as when water turns to air, or air to water, or when
93 plants become soil or ashes, or soil becomes a plant. This is the meaning of breakdown. But the destruction of a non-physical being which does not depend for its existence on any body, and which completely transcends the physical, is utterly inconceivable.

Satisfied that his true self could not perish, he desired to know what its fate would be once it had freed itself of the body and left it behind. Clearly this being would not abandon the body until no further use could be derived from it as a tool.[163]

Hayy surveyed all his powers of perception and saw that each works actually at one time, potentially at another.[164] The eye, for example, when closed or averted from its object still sees potentially. The meaning of 'seeing potentially' is that while it is not seeing now, it will in the future. When open and turned toward its object, it actually sees. 'Seeing actually' means seeing now.[165] The same holds for all these
94 faculties, they all work either actually or potentially.

Any faculty of apprehension which at no time actually perceives but remains "forever potential", never desiring to grasp its appropriate object because that object has never been encountered by it, is like a man born blind. If such a faculty actually does perceive for a time and then relapses into potentiality, but even in the potential state still yearns for actual perception, since it has known its proper object and grown fond of it, then it is like a sighted man gone

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blind who still longs for what he used to see. The more beautiful, whole, or good the objects he once knew, the greater his longing for them and grief at their loss. For this reason the sorrow of a man who has lost his sight is greater than that of one who has lost his sense of smell, for the objects of sight are higher and better than those of smell.

If there is a Being Whose perfection is infinite, Whose splendor and goodness know no bounds, Who is beyond perfection, goodness, and beauty, a Being such that no perfection, no goodness, no beauty, no splendor does not flow from Him, then to lose hold of such a Being, and having known Him to be unable to find Him must mean infinite torture as long as He is not found. Likewise to preserve constant awareness of Him is to know joy without lapse, unending bliss, infinite rapture and delight. *95*

Hayy had already realized that while He transcends all privations, every attribute of perfection can be applied to the Necessarily Existent. He also knew that what in him had allowed him to apprehend this Being was unlike bodies and would not decay as they did. From this he saw that, leaving the body at death, anyone with an identity like his own, capable of awareness such as he possessed, must undergo one of these three fates: If, while in command of the body, he has not known the Necessarily Existent, never confronted Him or heard of Him, then on leaving the body he will neither long for this Being nor mourn His loss. His bodily powers will go to ruin with the body, and thus make no more demands or miss the objects of their cravings now that they are gone. This is the fate of all dumb animals—even those of human form. If, while in charge of the body, he has encountered this Being and learned of His goodness but turned away to follow his own passions, until death overtook him in the midst of such a life, depriving him of the experience he has learned to long for, he will endure prolonged agony and infinite pain, either escaping the torture at last, after an immense struggle, to witness once again what he yearned for, or remaining forever in torment, depending on which direction he tended toward in his bodily life. If he knows the Necessarily Existent before departing *96*

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the body, and turns to Him with his whole being, fastens his thoughts on His goodness, beauty, and majesty, never turning away until death overtakes him, turned toward Him in the midst of actual experience, then on leaving the body, he will live on in infinite joy, bliss, and delight, happiness unbroken because his experience of the Necessarily Existent will be unbroken and no longer marred by the demands of the bodily powers for sensory things—which alongside this ecstasy are encumbrances, irritants and evils.

Seeing that self-realization and happiness meant constant
97 actual experience of the Necessarily Existent, turning away not for an instant so that when death came it would find him rapt in ecstasy and the continuity of his delight would remain unbroken by pain, Hayy considered how he might maintain continuous, actual awareness without distraction. He would concentrate on that Being[166] for a time, but as soon as he did some sensory thing would present itself to view, some animal cry would split his ears, some image would dart across his mind, he would feel a pain somewhere, or get hungry or thirsty or hot or cold,[167] or have to get up to relieve himself. His thoughts would be disrupted, and he would lose what he had begun to reach. It was impossible for him to recapture the experience without tremendous effort; and he feared death might surprise him in a moment of distraction, leaving him to sink into the everlasting misery and torment of deprivation.[168] The malady was grave, and he did not know the cure.

Hayy went back over all the animal species, checking all
98 their doings and strivings to see whether he might not find one that was aware of this Being and made Him its goal, to learn from it how to save himself. But all animals, he saw, struggled day and night simply getting enough to eat, satisfying their appetites for food, water, mates, shade, and shelter, until their span of time was up and they died.[169] Not one could be seen to diverge from the pattern or ever strive toward anything else. Apparently, then, none of them was aware of this Being, desired Him, or had any notion of Him. All of them would turn to nothing, or next to nothing.

Having judged this to be true of animals, Hayy recognized that it would be all the more so with plants, which

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have only a fraction of the avenues of perception open to animals. If animals whose apprehension is the better and more complete, are incapable of reaching this level of consciousness, then beings whose perception is stunted are all the further removed from such an attainment. After all, the whole of plant functioning goes no further than nutrition and reproduction.

He looked to the stars and spheres then, seeing how all circled in an ordered array of rhythmic motion. They were diaphanous and luminous, far above all change and decay, *99* and he made a strong surmise that they too had identities apart from their bodies, identities which knew this necessarily existent being and were neither physical nor imprints on anything physical. How could they not have such identities, free of all that is bodily, when, with all his weakness, his desperate dependence on sensory things, and despite the fact that he lived among decaying bodies, even he had such a self? His inadequacy did not prevent his true being from standing independent of all physical things and incorruptible. Clearly the heavenly bodies must be all the more so. Thus Hayy knew that they would know the Necessarily Existent and that their awareness of Him would be continuously actual since they are not subject to such hindrances as the sensory distractions that interrupted his own contemplation.[170]

He asked himself then why he of all living beings should be singled out to possess an identity that made him very like the stars. He had seen how the elements changed into one another. Nothing on the face of the earth kept the same form. All was in a constant alternation of build-up *100* and breakdown. Most bodies were mixtures, compounded of conflicting things, and so all the more prone to degeneration. No physical thing was pure, although those which came closest to untainted purity, such as gold and sapphire,[171] lasted longest. The heavenly bodies *were* pure and uncompounded, and for this reason not subject to a succession of forms, and virtually beyond destruction.

Hayy had learned, moreover, that of bodies in the world of generation and decay some, namely the four elements, were made up of just one form besides physicality, while

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others, such as plants and animals, comprised more than one additional form. Those with the fewest forms to compose their reality showed the least activity and were at the furthest remove from life. If form were absent completely, life was totally impossible; the result was something very like non-being.[172] Beings composed of a greater number of forms showed more activity and a closer approach to life. When form became inseparable from matter, then life was present at its strongest, stablest, and most unmistakable.

101

What has no form at all is *hyle*, matter. It is not in the least alive, but next to non-existent. Composed with just one form are the four elements, occupying the lowest ontic rungs in the world of generation and decay. From these are compounded things with more than one form. The elements have a very weak claim on life, not only because each has only one mode of motion, but also because each has an opposite working directly against it, tending to cancel its effects and eradicate its form. For this reason its existence is unstable and its "life" tenuous. The purchase of plants on life is stronger, however; and animals are plainly more alive than they. The reason is that in ordinary compounds the nature of one element predominates. Its strength in the composite overwhelms the other elements and destroys their capacities to function. Such a compound passes under the sway of the prevailing element and thus becomes unsuited for life to any but a trivial degree—just as that element alone makes a negligible bid for life.

102

In those compounds, however, which are not dominated by the nature of one element, where the elements are mutually tempered and counterbalanced (and for this reason one element does not wipe out the effective force of its opposite to any greater degree than its own power of action is checked by the other), each element's potential will do its work on the other to just the right extent, allowing the activity of one to show up no plainer than that of any other. No one element will take over the whole, so the whole will bear little resemblance to any of them. Its form, then, will have virtually no direct opposite—thus it will be ideally suited for life.

103

The stronger and stabler the equilibrium, the harder it

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is to find any opposite to work against it and the fuller its share in life. Since the vital spirit situated in the heart is securely balanced in such an equilibrium, being finer than earth or water, but denser than fire or air, it is a middle so to speak, and no one element is in direct conflict with it. This fits it well for life.

The implication Hayy drew from this was that the vital spirit with the stablest equilibrium would be fit for the highest form of life to be found in the world of generation and decay. The form of such a spirit could virtually be said to have no opposite. In this it would resemble the heavenly bodies, the forms of which have none at all. The spirit of such an animal, being truly at a mean among the elements, would have absolutely no tendency up or down. In fact, *104*
if it could be set in space, between the center and the outermost limit of fire, without being destroyed, it would stabilize there, neither rising nor falling. If it moved in place, it would orbit like the stars, and if it moved in position it would spin on its axis. Its shape could only be spherical. Thus it would bear a strong resemblance to the heavenly bodies.[173]

Hayy had considered all phases of animal life and found none that gave him reason to suspect it was aware of the Necessarily Existent. But his own consciousness informed him that it was aware of Him. He was sure, for this reason, that he himself was the ideally balanced animal, kindred spirit of the celestial bodies. Apparently, he was a species set apart from all other animal species, created for a different end than all the rest, dedicated to a great task which no animal could undertake.

Sufficient to establish his superiority was the fact that *105*
even his lower, bodily half bore the closest resemblance to those heavenly starsubstances that lived beyond the world of generation and decay, far beyond all change and want.[174] As for his nobler part, it was by this that he knew the Necessarily Existent Being. This conscious part was something sovereign, divine, unchanging and untouched by decay, indescribable in physical terms, invisible to both sense and imagination, unknowable through any instrument but itself, yet self-discovered, at once the knower, the known and

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knowing, the subject and object of consciousness, and consciousness itself.[175] There is no distinction among the three, for distinction and disjunction apply to bodies. But here there is no body and physical predicates and relations do not apply.[176]

Seeing that what made him different from all other animals made him like the heavenly bodies, Hayy judged that this implied an obligation on his part to take them as his pattern, imitate their action and do all he could to be like them.

By the same token, Hayy saw that his nobler part, by
106 which he knew the Necessarily Existent, bore some resemblance to Him as well. For like Him it transcended the physical. Thus another obligation was to endeavor, in whatever way possible, to attain His attributes, to imitate His ways, and remold his character to His, diligently execute His will, surrender all to Him, accept in his heart His every judgement outwardly and inwardly. Even when He caused harm or pain to his body, even if He destroyed it completely, he must rejoice in His rule.[177]

He recognized, however, that he was like the lesser animals in his lower half, the body, for it belonged to the world of generation and decay. It was dull and dark and demanded sensory things of him—food, drink, intercourse.[178] Still he knew that this body had not been created for him idly. It had not been linked with him for nothing.[179] He must care for and preserve it, even though in so doing he would do no more than any animal.

His duties, then, seemed to fall under three heads, those
107 in which he would resemble an inarticulate animal, those in which he would resemble a celestial body, and those in which he would resemble the Necessarily Existent Being. He had to act like an animal to the extent that he had a dull, sublunary body with differentiated parts and conflicting powers and drives. He had an obligation to imitate the stars in virtue of the vital spirit in his heart, which was command point for the rest of the body and all its powers. It was his obligation to become like the Necessarily Existent
108 because he was (and to the extent that he was) himself,[180] that is to the extent of his identity with that self which

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brought him his awareness of the Necessarily Existent Being.

Hayy had learned that his ultimate happiness and triumph over misery would be won only if he could make his awareness of the Necessarily Existent so continuous that nothing could distract him from it for an instant. He had wondered how this might be achieved and now came to the conclusion that the means would be to practice these three forms of mimesis.

The first would by no means give him this ecstasy. On the contrary, it would hinder the experience and distract him from it, since it meant handling sensory things, and all sense objects are veils blocking out such experience. This type of imitating was needed only to preserve the vital spirit, by which he might accomplish the second sort of assimilation, that by which he would become like the heavenly bodies. Thus the first type was a necessity despite its inherent drawbacks. His second type of imitation, however, did bring a large measure of continuity to his contemplation. Still the experience was not altogether untainted, for at this level of experience, one remains self-conscious and self-regarding, as will be made clear shortly.

The third sort of imitation is attainment of the pure beatific experience, submersion, concentration on Him alone Whose existence is necessary. In this experience the self vanishes; it is extinguished, obliterated—and so are all other subjectivities. All that remains is the One, True identity, the Necessarily Existent—glory, exaltation, and honor to Him.[181]

Hayy knew that his supreme goal was this third form of mimesis; but this would not be his without a long stint of training and self-discipline through the second, and this itself would not hold up for long if he neglected the first. He knew also that serving his first likeness, although necessary and *per accidens* helpful, would hamper his true self. So he made himself a rule to impose on himself no more of this first form of imitation than was necessary to keep the vital spirit on the brink of survival. Necessity called for two things to preserve this spirit: one to sustain it from within and replace what broke down, that is food; and the

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other to protect if from without and keep off various sorts of harm such as heat and cold, rain, too much sun, and harmful animals.

If he heedlessly allowed himself these necessities when and where he found them, he might well go too far and take more than he needed. Without his realizing it, his efforts might work against him. The prudent thing, Hayy saw,
110 would be to set himself a limit he would not overstep. There would be certain fixed quantities he would not surpass. He must make rules about what to eat, how much, and how often.

He first considered what to eat. There seemed to be three sorts of food: plants that had not yet reached peak maturity, that is various edible green vegetables; fruits of plants that had completed their life cycles and were ready to produce a new generation, comprising fresh and dried fruit; and animals, terrestrial and marine.

All these he was certain were the work of that Necessarily Existent Being, whom he must endeavor to be like, as he
111 now saw clearly, if he were to attain happiness. Feeding on them would unavoidably cut them off from their own fulfillment and prevent them all from achieving their intended purpose. This would mean opposition to the work of the Creator and defeat the whole aim of drawing near Him and becoming like Him.

The answer, apparently, was, if possible, to give up eating completely. Unfortunately he could not do so because not eating tended to make his own body waste away, which was even more glaring a contradiction to the work of his Creator, since he was superior to those other beings whose destruction meant his survival. So Hayy chose the lesser of evils. He was forced to condone in himself the slighter form of opposition to His work.

He decided that if some varieties of food were unavailable, he would take whatever came most readily to hand in a quantity he would set. But if all were available, then he would have to decide carefully what to eat so as to bring about the least opposition to the work of the Creator. Thus he could eat such things as the meat of fully ripened fruits,
112 with seeds ready to reproduce, provided he was certain not

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to eat or harm the seeds or throw them in places unfit for vegetation—among rocks or in salt flats or the like. If it was hard to find fruit with nourishing meat, such as apples, plums, and pears, then he would have to eat either fruits in which only the seed had food-value, such as nuts and chestnuts, or else green vegetables—on condition that he pick only the most abundant and prolific and be sure not to uproot them or destroy the seeds. If none of these were available, then he must eat meat or eggs, again being careful to take only from the most abundant and not root out a whole species. So much for his notion of what he should eat.[182]

As for the amount, he felt it should be enough to stave off hunger, but no more. For the time to be allowed between meals, he considered he should eat what he needed 113
and then look for no more until he began to feel too weak to carry out some of the tasks imposed on him by his second mode of imitation, which will be spoken of in a moment.

In terms of protection, the requirements for keeping alive the vital spirit were easily taken care of. He wore skins and had a house to guard against any incursion of the environment. This was enough for him.[183] He did not consider it worth his while to spend a great deal of time on it. He did keep the dietary rules he'd made for himself, which I have described.

Having secured the needs of his body, inside and out, Hayy took up his second duty, to become like the celestial bodies, to do as they did, and model himself on their attributes. Their properties, in his judgement, fell into three classes: First, their attributes in relation to the world of generation and decay below, giving warmth essentially, and *per accidens* cooling, radiation of light, thickening and thin- 114
ning and all the other things they do to prepare the world for the outpouring of spirit-forms upon it from the Necessarily Existent Creator.[184] Second, the properties they had in and of themselves, transparency, luminescence, purity from all taint, and transcendence of all tarnish, their circular motion, whether on their own axis or around some other center. Third, their attributes in relation to the Necessarily Existent, their continuous, undistracted awareness of Him,

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their longing for Him,[185] their total submission to His rule and devoted execution of His will, moving only at His pleasure and always in the clasp of His hand.[186]

Hayy exerted every effort to be like them in these three ways. For the first, he imitated their action by never allowing himself to see any plant or animal hurt, sick, encumbered, or in need without helping it if he could. If he noticed a plant cut off from the sun, he would, if possible,
115 remove what was screening it. If he saw one plant tangled in another that might harm it, he would separate the two so carefully that not even the weed was damaged. If he saw a plant dying for lack of water, he would water it as often as he could. When he saw an animal attacked by a predator,[187] caught in a tangle, or stuck by a thorn, or with anything harmful in its eye or ear, or under pressure of hunger or thirst, Hayy did all he could to alleviate the situation and gave it food and water. Chancing to see an animal or plant's water-supply cut off by a fallen rock or a fragment swept away from the overhanging riverbank, he would always clear away the obstacle. He kept up his practice at this particular variety of imitation until he reached peak proficiency.[188]

To be like the heavenly bodies in the second respect, Hayy made sure always to be clean, washing frequently with water, getting all the dirt and grime off his body,
116 cleaning his teeth, nails, and every nook and cranny of his body—even scenting it as best as he could with plant fragrances and various pleasant smelling oils. He took great care to see that his clothes were always clean and fragrant, and soon he did begin to sparkle with vitality, cleanliness, and beauty.[189]

In addition, Hayy prescribed himself circular motion of various kinds. Sometimes he would circle the island, skirting along the beach and roving in the inlets. Sometimes he would march around his house or certain large rocks a set number of times, either walking or at a trot.[190] Or at times he would spin around in circles until he got dizzy.[191]

His method of becoming like the heavenly bodies in the third respect was to fix his mind on the Necessarily Existent Being, cut away the bonds of all objects of the senses—shut

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his eyes, stop his ears, use all the force at his command to restrain the play of imagination[192]—and try with all his might to think only of Him, without idolatrously mixing any other thought with the thought of Him.[193] Often he would aid himself by spinning around faster and faster.

If he spun fast enough, all sensory things would vanish; imagination itself, and every other faculty dependent on *117*
bodily organs would fade, and the action of his true self, which transcended the body, would grow more powerful. In this way sometimes his mind would be cleansed, and through it he would see the Necessarily Existent—until the bodily powers rushed back, disrupting his ecstasy, and reducing him once more to the lowest of the low.[194] Then he would start over again.

When he became so weak that he could no longer work toward his goal, he would take a little nourishment, always following his rules, and return to his three ways of imitating the celestial bodies. Tirelessly he battled against the drives of his body—and they fought back. But when for a moment he had the upper hand and rid his mind of tarnish, he would see with a flash what it was like to reach this third type of likeness to the stars.[195]

He then began to explore in the endeavor to achieve the third type of imitation. He considered the attributes of the Necessarily Existent. Already at the purely intellectual *118*
stage, before taking up active practice,[196] Hayy had learned that these attributes are of one of two kinds: either positive, like knowledge, power, and wisdom, or negative, like transcendence of the physical and all that even remotely pertains to it. This transcendence implies that the list of positive attributes can include no attribute proper to physical things—as is plurality. Thus His positive attributes do not render His identity plural, but all must reduce to one principle, which is His real self.[197]

Hayy then took up the task of becoming like Him in both these ways. For the positive attributes, knowing they all reduced to His identity (since plurality, belonging to physical things, was totally out of place here) and thus realizing that His self-awareness was not distinct from Himself, but His identity was Self-consciouness and His Self-knowledge

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was Himself, Hayy understood that if he himself could learn to know Him, then his knowledge of Him too would not be distinct from His essence, but would be identical with Him.[198] Thus Hayy learned that to become like Him in His positive attributes is simply to know Him, without sacrile-
119 giously associating anything physical with Him. This he set out to do.

The negative qualities all reduced to transcendence of physicality. So Hayy set about eliminating the physical in himself. The exercises by which he approached some likeness to the heavenly bodies had already brought him quite a way in this direction. Still, many vestiges remained: For example, his circular motion, since 'motion' was a predicate appropriate only to physical objects.[199] His compassion and solicitude for animals and plants and his eagerness to remove anything that hampered them were themselves characteristic of the physical, since he would not have seen the objects of his concern in the first place without using a corporeal faculty; and to help them too required use of his bodily powers.

So Hayy undertook to expel all this from himself, for none of these things was conducive to the ecstasy he now sought. He would stay in his cave,[200] sitting on the stone floor, head bent, eyes shut, oblivious to all objects of the senses and urges of the body, his thoughts and all his devotion focused on the Being Whose Existence is Necessity, alone and with-
120 out rival. When any alien thought sprang to his imagination, Hayy would resist it with all his might and drive it out of his mind.

He disciplined himself and practiced endurance until sometimes days could pass without his moving or eating. And sometimes, in the midst of his struggles, all thoughts and memories would vanish—except self-consciousness. Even when immersed in the beatific experience of the Necessarily Existent Truth, his own subjecthood would not disappear. This tormented Hayy, for he knew it was a blot on the purity of the experience, division of his attention as if with some other God. Hayy made a concerted effort to purge his awareness-of-the-Truth, die to himself. At last

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it came. From memory and mind all disappeared, "heaven and earth and all that is between them,"[201] all forms of the spirit and powers of the body, even the disembodied powers that know the Truly Existent. And with the rest vanished the identity that was himself. Everything melted away, dissolved, "scattered into fine dust."[202] All that remained was the One, the True Being, Whose existence is eternal, Who uttered words identical with himself: "Whose is the Kingdom on this day? God's alone, One and Triumphant!"[203]

Hayy understood His words and "heard" the summons they made. Not knowing how to speak did not prevent him from understanding.[204] Drowned in ecstasy, he witnessed "what no eye has seen or ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive."[205] *121*

Now do not set your heart on a description of what has never been represented in a human heart. For many things that are articulate in the heart cannot be described. How then can I formularize something that cannot possibly be projected in the heart, belonging to a different world, a different order of being?

Nor by 'heart' do I mean only the physical heart or the spirit it encloses. I mean also the form of that spirit which spreads its powers throughout the human body. All three of these might be termed 'heart', but there is no way of articulating this experience in any of them, and only what is articulate can be expressed. The ambition to put this into words is reaching for the impossible—like wanting to taste colors, expecting black as such to taste either sweet or sour.[206] *122*

Still I shall not leave you without some hint as to the wonders Hayy saw from this height, not by pounding on the gates of truth, but by coining symbols,[207] for there is no way of finding out what truly occurs at this plateau of experience besides reaching it. So listen now with the ears of your heart and look sharp with the eyes of your mind, for what I shall try to convey to you. Perhaps in what I say you will find guideposts to set you on the main road. My only condition is that you now demand of me no further

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explanation of this experience than I set down in these pages. For it is dangerous to make pronouncements on the ineffable, and the margins in which I work are narrow.

To continue, Hayy had "died" to himself, and to every other self. He had witnessed his vision and seen nothing in all existence but the everliving ONE. Recovered now
123 from his seemingly intoxicated ecstasy, he saw other things once more, and the notion came into his head that his identity was none other than that of the Truth. His true self was the Truth. What he had once supposed to be himself, as distinct from the Truth, was really nothing in itself, but was in reality in no way discrete from the Truth.[208] When sunlight falls on opaque bodies and becomes visible, it may bear some relation to the object it lights up, but it is never really anything other than sunlight. When the body is gone, so is its light, but the sun's light remains the same, not increased by the object's absence or diminished by its presence. If an object comes along capable of taking on this type of light, then it receives it; if no such object is present there is no reflecting and no occasion for it.

Hayy was confirmed in the notion by his awareness that the Truth, glorified and exalted be He, was not in any sense plural and that His Self-knowledge was Himself. It seemed to him to follow that whoever gains consciousness of His
124 essence wins that essence itself. Hayy had attained His identity. This identity could be reached only by Himself; indeed this very Self-awareness was His identity. If so, then Hayy must be identical with Him, and so must every disembodied being that knows Him. These he had once seen as many; but now, in the light of this presumption, they seemed to merge into one entity.

This specious thinking might well have taken root in his soul, had not God in His mercy caught hold of him and guided him back to the truth.[209] He then realized that he would never have fallen prey to such a delusion unless some shadows of the physical or taint of sensory things still lurked within him. For 'many', 'few', and 'one'; 'singularity' and 'plurality'; 'union' and 'discreteness', are all predicates applicable only to physical things.[210] But those non-material beings who know the Truth, glorified and exalted be He,

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precisely because they are free of matter, need not be said to be either one or many. The reason is that there is multiplicity only when there is otherness and unity only where there is contact. Both of these make sense only for things that are compounded—and confounded—in matter.

Expression on this subject, however, is extremely difficult. If you speak of the non-material beings in the plural, as I have, it suggests that they are many. But they are entirely 125
free of plurality. If, on the other hand, you use the singular, it suggests absolute unity, which is equally impossible for them.

What is this? It seems to be a bat that interrupts me, its eyes blinded by the sun,[211] baffled in the meshes of its own mad confusion, crying "This time your hair-splitting has gone too far. You have shed what the intelligent know by instinct and abandoned the rule of reason. It is an axiom of reason that a thing must be either one or many!"

Now if he could just calm himself and curb the rashness of his tongue—if he could only suspect himself and consider the vile, sensory world in which he lives, consider it as Hayy Ibn Yaqzān did, when from one point of view it seemed plural beyond number or term; and from another, a monolith. Hayy could not decide one way or the other, but remained oscillating between the two descriptions. 126
Such a quandary over the sense world, the birthplace and proper home of whatever legitimate understanding is conveyed by 'singular' and 'plural', 'discrete' and 'continuous', 'separate' and 'conjoined', 'identical' and 'other', 'same' and 'different'. What then was Hayy to think of the divine world, where 'whole' and 'part' are inapplicable, a world indescribable without misrepresentation, which no one can know or fully understand without actually reaching it and seeing for himself.

He says I have "left what every sound mind is born with and abandoned the rule of reason."[212] I shall grant him that. I have left him and his reason and his "sound minds." What he means by reason—he and his ilk—is no more than the power to articulate, to abstract a general concept from a number of sensory particulars, and his "men of sound reason" are simply those whose minds work the same way. But

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the kind of understanding I am speaking of transcends all this.[213] The man who knows only sense particulars and universals drawn from them had better stop up his ears and
127 go back to his friends, who "know only the surface of this life and are heedless of the next."[214]

Still, if in your case a hint and a glimpse will be enough to give you some idea of the divine world, and if you can avoid construing my words in their ordinary senses,[215] then I can tell you a bit more of what Hayy Ibn Yaqzān saw in his ecstasy. Passing through a deep trance to the complete death-of-self and real contact with the divine,[216] he saw a being corresponding to the highest sphere, beyond which there is no body, a subject free of matter, and neither identical with the Truth and the One nor with the sphere itself, nor distinct from either[217]—as the form of the sun appearing in a polished mirror is neither sun nor mirror, and yet distinct from neither. The splendor, perfection, and beauty he saw in the essence of that sphere were too magnificent to be described and too delicate to be clothed in written or spoken words. But he saw it to be at the pinnacle of joy,
128 delight, and rapture, in blissful vision of the being of the Truth, glorious be His Majesty.[218]

Just below this, at the sphere of the fixed stars, Hayy saw another non-material being. This again was neither identical with the Truth and the One, nor with the highest sphere, nor even with itself, yet distinct from none of these. It was like the form of the sun appearing in one mirror, reflected from a second which faced the sun. Here too were glory, beauty, and joy as in the highest. Lying just below he saw the identity of the sphere of Saturn, again divorced from matter and neither the same as nor different from the beings he had seen—as it were, the reflection of the reflection of the reflection of the sun; and here too he saw splendor and rapture as before.

129 Thus for each sphere he witnessed a transcendent immaterial subject, neither identical with nor distinct from those above, like the form of the sun reflected from mirror to mirror with the descending order of spheres.[219] In each one Hayy sensed goodness, beauty, joy, and bliss that "no eye has seen, or ear heard, nor has it entered the heart of man to

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conceive," until finally he reached the world of generation and decay, the bowels of the sphere of the moon.[220]

Here too was an essence free of matter, not one with those he had seen—but none other. Only this being had seventy thousand faces. In every face were seventy thousand mouths; in every mouth, seventy thousand tongues, with which it ceaselessly praised, glorified, and sanctified[221] the being of the One who is the Truth.

In this being, which he took to be many although it is not, Hayy saw joy and perfection as before. It was as though the form of the sun were shining in rippling water *130*
from the last mirror in the sequence, reflected down the series from the first, which faced directly into the sun. Suddenly he caught sight of himself as an unembodied subject. If it were permissible to single out individuals from the identity of the seventy thousand faces, I would say that he was one of them.[222] Were it not that his being was created originally, I would say that they were he. And had this self of his not been individuated by a body on its creation I would have said that it had not come to be.[223]

From this height he saw other selves like his own, that had belonged to bodies which had come to be and perished, or to bodies with which they still coëxisted. There were so many (if one may speak of them as many) that they reached infinity. Or, if one may call them one, then all were one. In himself and in the other beings of his rank, Hayy saw goodness, beauty, joy without end, the like of which eyes cannot see, ears hear, or human hearts conceive, ineffable, *131*
known only by the aware, who arrive.[224]

He saw also many disembodied identities, more like tarnished mirrors, covered with rust, their faces averted and their backs to the brilliant mirrors in which shone the image of the sun. They were ugly, defective, and deformed beyond his imagining. In unending throes of torture and ineradicable agony, imprisoned in a pavilion of torment, scorched by the flaming partition,[225] they were tossed about like chaff by pitchforks, now frantically scattered, now huddled together in fear.

Besides these tortured beings he saw others which had

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once been tightly knit and shone brightly, but had now dimmed and grown loose and ravelled. Hayy scrutinized these, studied them well. He saw a terrible sight, vast ruination, skittering creatures and a grave sentence, the fashioning of man and the raising up of creation, the outflow of the breath of life and its eradication.[226] Little by little he pulled himself together. His senses came back. He regained consciousness from what seemed to have been a faint and lost his foothold on that plane of experience. As the world of the senses loomed back into view, the divine world van-
132 ished, for the two cannot be joined in one state of being—like two wives: if you make one happy, you make the other miserable.[227]

You may object, "Your treatment of his experience shows that if these non-material identities belong to eternal, indestructible bodies like the spheres, they too will endure forever. But what if they belong to bodies subject to decay, such as that of the rational animal? Then they too ought to perish. By your own analogy of the reflecting mirrors, the image has permanence only so long as there is a mirror. If the mirror is ruined, then the image is obliterated."

I can only reply, it certainly did not take you long to forget our bargain and break my conditions! Did I not just tell you how narrow my scope for expression is here and warn you that my words would make a false impression in any case. Your misapprehension is due solely to your confusing my symbol with what it represents. You expect a one-for-one correspondence. Such literalism is not tolerable with ordinary figures of speech, and it is all the less toler-
133 able in this special context. The sun, its light, its form and image, the mirrors and the forms reflected in them are all inseparable from physical bodies, unable to subsist without them, thus dependent on them for existence itself, and of course destroyed when they are destroyed.

But these divine, sovereign spirits all utterly transcend the physical and everything dependent on it. There is no tie of any kind between the two. To these beings, whether bodies endure or perish, whether they exist or not, is all the same. Their sole bond is to the One, the Truth, the Neces-

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sarily Existent, Who is the first of them, their origin and cause, the ground of their existence, Who gives them being, allows them to endure and even to be eternal. They have no need of bodies. On the contrary, all bodies depend on them. If they could conceivably go out of existence, then all material objects would go with them, for all physical things originate from them. In the same way, assuming the Truth Himself were to become non-existent—sanctified be He and exalted above all such thoughts!—then not one of these essences would exist, no physical things, no sense world, nothing! For all things are bound one to the next.[228]

Yet even though the sense world mimics the divine like *134*
a shadow, and the divine world is self-sufficient and totally independent, still it is impossible to postulate complete non-existence for the sensory world, for the very reason that it does reflect the world of the divine. The destruction of the world, then, can mean only that it is transformed, not that it goes out of existence altogether. The Holy Book speaks clearly to this effect in describing how the mountains will be set in motion and become like tufts of wool, and men like moths, the sun and moon cast down, the seas split open and spilled out, on the Day when the earth turns to what is no longer earth, and the heavens to what is no longer heaven.[229]

These hints and no more I am able to relate concerning what Hayy Ibn Yaqzān witnessed at this lofty plane. Do not ask me to add anything more in words. That would be next to impossible. But I will tell you the rest of the story. Returned to the world of the senses from his wandering, Hayy grew weary of the cares of this world and longed still more for that other life. He tried to return as before, and found he could reach this higher level more easily and remain longer. He returned to the sense world and set out *135*
again, finding he could reach this station still more easily and stay still longer. Again and again he returned to that sublime state, more and more easily, more and more sustainedly, until he reached the point that he could attain it whenever he wished and remain as long as he liked.

He would stay riveted to his station, turning away only to attend the needs of his body, which had by now so wasted away that a more meagre figure could scarcely be

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found.[230] All the while, Hayy longed that God—glory to Him—would ease him altogether of his body,[231] which constantly called him away from his post, and let him enjoy bliss untrammelled and undisrupted, free of the painful need of leaving his vantage point to tend to the body. In this fashion Hayy lived until he had passed his seventh septenary and reached the age of fifty. It was then he chanced to make the acquaintance of Absāl. God willing, I shall tell you the tale of their friendship.

136 Near the island where, according to one of the two conflicting accounts of his origin, Hayy was born, there was, so they say, a second island, in which had settled the followers of a certain true religion, based on the teachings of a certain ancient prophet—God's blessing on all such prophets. Now the practice in this religion was to represent all reality in symbols, providing concrete images of things and impressing their outlines on the people's souls, just as orators do when addressing a multitude. The sect spread widely throughout the island, ultimately growing so powerful and prominent that the king himself converted to it and made the people embrace it as well.[232]

There had grown up on this island two fine young men of ability and high principle, one named Absāl and the other Salāmān.[233] Both had taken instruction in this religion and accepted it enthusiastically. Both held themselves duty-bound to abide by all its laws and precepts for living.[234] They practiced their religion together; and together, from time to time, they would study some of that religion's traditional expressions describing God—exalted be He—the angels He sends, and the character of resurrection, reward and punishment. Absāl, for his part, was the more deeply con-
137 cerned with getting down to the heart of things, the more eager to discover spiritual values, and the more ready to attempt a more or less allegorical interpretation. Salāmān, on the other hand, was more anxious to preserve the literal and less prone to seek subtle intensions. On the whole he avoided giving too free rein to his thoughts.[235] Still each of them executed the express commands of the text fastidiously, kept watch over his soul, and fought his passions.[236]

In the Law[237] were certain statements proposing a life of

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solitude and isolation and suggesting that by these means salvation and spiritual triumph could be won. Other statements, however, favored life in a community and involvement in society. Absāl devoted himself to the quest for solitude, preferring the words of the Law in its favor because he was naturally a thoughtful man, fond of contemplation and of probing for the deeper meanings of things; and he did find the most propitious time for seeking what he hoped for to be when he was alone.[238] But Salāmān preferred being among people and gave greater weight to the sayings of the Law in favor of society, since he was by nature chary of too much independent thinking or doing. In staying with the group he saw some means of fending off demonic promptings,[239] dispelling distracting thoughts, and in general guarding against the goadings of the devil. Their differences on this point became the cause of their parting. *138*

For Absāl had heard of the island where it is said Hayy came to be. He knew how temperate, fruitful and hospitable it was and how easy it would be, for anyone who so desired, to live there in solitude. So he decided to go there and remain in isolation for the rest of his life. He took what money he had,[240] and with some hired a boat to take him to the island. The rest he divided among the poor; and, saying goodbye to his friend, he set sail. The sailors brought him to the island, set him down on the beach and left. Absāl remained there on the island, worshipping, magnifying, and sanctifying God—glory to Him—contemplating His most beautiful names and sublime attributes.[241]

His reveries were undisrupted; his thoughts, unsullied. When he needed food, he would take some of the island fruits or game, just enough to hold his appetite in check. He lived in this way for some time in most perfect happiness and intimacy with his Lord. Each day he could see for himself God's splendid gifts and acts of grace—the ease with which He allowed him to find not just his food but all his wants, confirming his trust and putting a sparkle in his eye.[242]

All this while Hayy Ibn Yaqzān was deeply immersed in *139*
his supernal ecstasies, emerging from his cave no more than once a week for whatever food came to hand. For this rea-

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son, Absāl did not come across him at first, but surveyed the whole island without seeing a soul or even a footprint—which made him all the happier, since his intention had been to be alone. But once, when Hayy had come out to look for food, Absāl happened to be nearby and they saw each other. Absāl had no doubt that this was another anchorite who had come to the island, as he had, in search of solitude. He was anxious not to disturb the other by introducing himself, for fear of disrupting his frame of mind and preventing his attaining the goal he would be hoping to reach.

Hayy, for his part, had not the least idea what Absāl was,
140 since he had the form of no animal he had ever laid eyes on. Besides, he was wearing a long, black cloak of wool and goat hair, which Hayy took to be his natural coat.[243] Hayy simply stood gazing at him in amazement; but Absāl, still hoping not to distract him, took to his heels and ran. Always naturally eager to find out about things, Hayy set out after him. But, seeing Absāl run still faster, he fell back and dropped out of sight, letting Absāl suppose he had lost the trail and gone elsewhere. Absāl then took up his devotions and was soon completely absorbed in invocations, recitations, weeping, and lamentations. Little by little Hayy crept up without Absāl's noticing, until he was in earshot of his praises and recitations and could make out how he was humbling himself and weeping. The voice he heard was pleasant and the sounds somehow clearly patterned, quite unlike the call of any animal he had ever heard before. On closer inspection of the other's features and the lines of his body, Hayy recognized the form as his own and realized
141 that the long coat was not a natural skin, but simply a garment intended for use like his own.

Seeing how abject Absāl made himself, Hayy had no doubt that he was one of those beings who know the Truth.[244] He felt drawn to him, and wanted to know what was wrong, what was it that made him cry. He approached closer and closer, but Absāl caught sight of him and fled. Hayy ran after him, and with the power and vigor God had given him, not just mentally, but physically as well, he caught up

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with him and seized him in a grip from which he could not escape.

When he got a good look at his captor, clothed in hides still bristling with fur, his hair so overgrown that it hung down over a good part of his body, when he saw how fast he could run and how fiercely he could grapple, Absāl was terrified and began to beg for mercy. Hayy could not understand a word he said. But he could make out the signs of fright and did his best to put the other at ease with a variety of animal cries he knew. Hayy also patted his head, rubbed his sides, and spoke soothingly to him, trying to show how delighted he was with him. Eventually Absāl's trepidation died down and he realized that Hayy did not mean him any harm.

Years before, in his passion for the study of the more *142*
sophisticated level of interpretation, Absāl had studied and gained fluency in many languages,[245] so he tried to speak to Hayy, asking him about himself in every language he knew. But Absāl was completely unable to make himself understood. Hayy was astounded by this performance, but had no idea what it might mean—unless it was a sign of friendliness and high spirits. Neither of them knew what to make of the other.

Absāl had a little food left over from the provisions he had brought from the civilized island. He offered it to Hayy, but Hayy did not know what it was. He had never seen anything like it. Absāl ate a bit and made signs to Hayy that he should eat some too. But Hayy was thinking of his dietary rules. Not knowing what the proffered food might be or what it was made from, he had no idea whether he was allowed to eat it or not, so he would not take any. Absāl, however, kept trying to interest him in it, in an effort to win him over. And Hayy, liking him and afraid to hurt his feelings by persistently refusing, took the food and ate some. The moment he tasted how good it was, Hayy knew he had *143*
done wrong to violate his pledged dietary restrictions. He regretted what he had done and wanted to get away from Absāl and devote himself to his true purpose, a return to sublimity.[246]

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But this time ecstasy would not come so readily. It seemed best to remain in the sense-world with Absāl until he had found out so much about him that he no longer felt any interest in him. Then he would be able to go back to his station without further distraction.[247] So he sought out Absāl's company. When Absāl, for his part, saw that Hayy did not know how to talk, the fears he had felt of harm to his faith were eased, and he became eager to teach him to speak, hoping to impart knowledge and religion to him, and by so doing earn God's favor and a greater reward.[248]

So Absāl began teaching him to talk, at first by pointing at some basic objects and pronouncing their names over and over, making him pronounce them too and pronounce them while pointing, until he had taught him nouns. Then he progressed with him, little by little and step by step, until in no time Hayy could speak.

144 Absāl then plied him with questions about himself and how he had come to the island. Hayy informed him that he had no idea of his origins. He knew of no father or any mother besides the doe that had raised him. He told all about his life and the growth of his awareness, culminating in contact with the divine. Hearing Hayy's description of the beings which are divorced from the sense-world and conscious of the Truth—glory be to Him—his description of the Truth Himself, by all His lovely attributes,[249] and his description, as best he could, of the joys of those who reach Him and the agonies of those veiled from Him, Absāl had no doubt that all the traditions of his religion about God, His angels, bibles and prophets, Judgement Day, Heaven and Hell were symbolic representations of these things that Hayy Ibn Yaqzān had seen for himself. The eyes of his heart were unclosed.[250] His mind caught fire.[251] Reason and tradition were at one within him. All the paths of exegesis lay open before him. All his old religious puzzlings were solved; all the obscurities, clear. Now he had "a heart to understand."[252]

145 Absāl looked on Hayy Ibn Yaqzān with newfound reverence. Here, surely, was a man of God, one of those who "know neither fear nor sorrow."[253] He wanted to serve as his disciple, follow his example and accept his direction in

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those things which in Absāl's own view corresponded to the religious practices he had learned in his society.[254]

Hayy then asked him about himself and his life; and Absāl, accordingly, set out to tell him about his island and the people who lived there. He described how they had lived before the advent of their present religion and how they acted now.[255] He related all the religious traditions describing the divine world, Heaven and Hell, rebirth and resurrection, the gathering and reckoning, the scales of justice and the strait way.[256] Hayy understood all this and found none of it in contradiction with what he had seen for himself from his supernal vantage point. He recognized that whoever had offered this description had given a faithful picture and spoken truly. This man must have been a "messenger sent by his Lord." Hayy believed in this messenger and the truth of what he said. He bore witness to his mission as apostle of God.[257]

What obligations and acts of worship had he prescribed, *146*
Hayy asked.[258] Absāl described prayer, poor tax, fasting, and pilgrimage, and other such outward practices.[259] Hayy accepted these and undertook to observe them. He held himself responsible to practice these things in obedience to the command of one whose truthfulness he could not doubt.

Still there were two things that surprised him and the wisdom of which he could not see. First, why did this prophet rely for the most part on symbols to portray the divine world, allowing mankind to fall into the grave error of conceiving the Truth corporeally and ascribing to Him things which He transcends and is totally free of (and similarly with reward and punishment) instead of simply revealing the truth? Second, why did he confine himself to these particular rituals and duties and allow the amassing of wealth and overindulgence in eating, leaving men idle to busy themselves with inane pastimes and neglect the Truth.[260] Hayy's own idea was that no one should eat the least bit more than would keep him on the brink of survival. Property meant nothing to him, and when he saw all the *147*
provisions of the Law to do with money, such as the regulations regarding the collection and distribution of welfare or those regulating sales and interest,[261] with all their statu-

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tory and discretionary penalties, he was dumbfounded. All this seemed superfluous. If people understood things as they really are, Hayy said, they would forget these inanities and seek the Truth. They would not need all these laws. No one would have any property of his own to be demanded as charity or for which human beings might struggle and risk amputation. What made him think so was his naive belief that all men had outstanding character, brilliant minds and resolute spirits. He had no idea how stupid, inadequate, thoughtless, and weak willed they are, "like sheep gone astray, only worse."[262]

Hayy deeply pitied mankind and hoped that it might be
148 through him that they would be saved. He was eager to go to these men to reveal and explain the Truth. He spoke about it with his friend Absāl, asking if he knew any way of reaching them. Absāl warned him how defective they are in character and how heedless of God's Word, but this was not easy for Hayy to understand. His heart was set on what he hoped to accomplish. Absāl himself had hopes that through Hayy God might give guidance to a body of aspiring acquaintances of his, who were somewhat closer to salvation than the rest.[263] He agreed to help with the idea.

The two men decided to stay by the shore day and night, in hopes that God might give them some ready means of crossing over. And so they stayed, humbly praying God to fortify them with sound judgment. By God's command it
149 happened that a ship lost its course and was driven by the winds and the beating of the waves to their shore. When it came close to land the men on board saw two men on the beach, so they rode in closer and Absāl hailed them and asked if they would take them along. The men answered yes and brought them on board. No sooner had they done so than God sent a favorable wind that brought the ship with all possible speed to the island where the two had hoped to go. They debarked and went up to the city. Absāl's friends gathered, and he told them all about Hayy Ibn Yaqzān. They all marvelled at the story. They crowded around him, making much of him, and in fact deeply in awe of him. Absāl informed Hayy that of all men this group approached nearest to intelligence and understanding. If

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Hayy were unable to teach them, it would be all the more impossible for him to teach the masses. The ruler of the island and its most eminent man at this time was Salāmān, Absāl's friend who believed in living within society and held it unlawful to withdraw. 150

Hayy Ibn Yaqzān began to teach this group and explain some of his profound wisdom to them. But the moment he rose the slightest bit above the literal or began to portray things against which they were prejudiced, they recoiled in horror from his ideas and closed their minds. Out of courtesy to the stranger and in deference to their friend Absāl, they made a show of being pleased with Hayy, but in their hearts they resented him. Hayy found them delightful and continued his exposition of the truth, exoteric and esoteric, night and day. But the more he taught, the more repugnance they felt, despite the fact that these were men who loved the good and sincerely yearned for the Truth. Their inborn infirmity simply would not allow them to seek Him as Hayy did, to grasp the true essence of His being and see Him in His own terms. They wanted to know Him in some 151 human way. In the end Hayy despaired of helping them and gave up his hopes that they would accept his teaching. Then, class by class, he studied mankind. He saw "every faction delighted with its own."[264] They had made their passions their god,[265] and desire the object of their worship. They destroyed each other to collect the trash of this world, "distracted by greed 'til they went down to their graves."[266] Preaching is no help, fine words have no effect on them. Arguing only makes them more pig-headed. Wisdom, they have no means of reaching; they were allotted no share of it.[267] They are engulfed in ignorance. Their hearts are corroded by their possessions.[268] God has sealed their hearts and shrouded their eyes and ears. Theirs will be an awesome punishment.[269]

When he saw that the torture pavilion already encircled them and the shadows of the veil already enshrouded them,[270] when he saw that all but a very few of them adhered to their religion only for the sake of this world[271] and 152 "flung away works, no matter how light and easy, sold them for a bad price",[272] distracted from the thought of God by

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business, heedless of the Day when hearts and eyes will be turned inwards,[273] Hayy saw clearly and definitely that to appeal to them publicly and openly was impossible. Any attempt to impose a higher task on them was bound to fail. The sole benefit most people could derive from religion was for this world, in that it helped them lead decent lives without others encroaching on what belonged to them. Hayy now knew that only a very few win the true happiness of the man who "desires the world to come, strives for it and is faithful."[274] But "for the insolent who prefer this life—Hell will be their refuge!"[275]

What weariness is heavier, what misery more overburdening than recounting all you do from the time you get up to the time you go to bed without finding a single action that did not amount to seeking one of these vile, sensory aims:
153 money making, pleasure seeking, satisfying some lust, venting rage, saving face, performing religious rites for the sake of honor, or just to save your neck![276] All these are only "cloud upon cloud over a deep sea."[277] "Not one among you will not descend there—this from your Lord, decreed and sealed."[278]

Hayy now understood the human condition. He saw that most men are no better than unreasoning animals, and realized that all wisdom and guidance, all that could possibly help them was contained already in the words of the prophets and the religious traditions. None of this could be different. There was nothing to be added.[279] There is a man for every task[280] and everyone belongs to the life for which he was created. "This was God's way with those who came before, and never will you find a change in the ways of God."[281]

So Hayy went to Salāmān and his friends and apologized, dissociating himself from what he had said.[282] He told them that he had seen the light and realized that they were right. He urged them to hold fast to their observance of all the statutes regulating outward behavior and not delve into things that did not concern them, submissively to accept all
154 the most problematical elements of the tradition[283] and shun originality and innovation,[284] follow in the footsteps of their

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righteous forbears and leave behind everything modern. He cautioned them most emphatically not to neglect religion or pursue the world as the vast majority of people do.

Hayy Ibn Yaqzān and his friend Absāl now knew that even this aspiring group fell short and could be saved only in their own way. If ever they were to venture beyond their present level to the vantage point of insight, what they had would be shattered,[285] and even so they would be unable to reach the level of the blessed. They would waver and slip and their end would be all the worse. But if they went along as they were until overtaken by death, they would win salvation and come to sit on the right. *But* "those who run in the forefront, those who run in the forefront, *they* will be brought near."[286]

So, saying goodbye to them, the two left their company and discreetly sought passage back to their own island.[287] Soon God—exalted be He—gave them an easy crossing. Hayy searched for his ecstasy as he had before, until once again it came. Absāl imitated him until he approached the same heights, or nearly so. Thus they served God on the *155*
island until man's certain fate overtook them.

And this—may God give you spirit to strengthen you—is the story of Hayy Ibn Yaqzān, Absāl and Salāmān. It takes up a line of discourse not found in books or heard in the usual sort of speeches. It belongs to a hidden branch of study received only by those who are aware of God and unknown to those who know Him not. In treating of this openly I have broken the precedent of our righteous ancestors, who were sparing to the point of tightfistedness in speaking of it. What made it easy for me to strip off the veil of secrecy and divulge this mystery was the great number of corrupt ideas that have sprouted up and are being openly spread by the self-styled philosophers of today, so widely that they have covered the land and caused universal damage. Fearing that the weak-minded, who throw over the authority of prophets to ape the ways of fools, might mistake these notions for the esoteric doctrines which must be kept secret from those unfit to know them, and thus *156*
be all the more enticed to embrace them, I decided to af-

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ford them a fleeting glimpse of the mystery of mysteries to draw them to true understanding and turn them away from this other, false way.[288]

Nonetheless I have not left the secrets set down in these few pages entirely without a veil—a sheer one, easily pierced by those fit to do so, but capable of growing so thick to those unworthy of passing beyond that they will never breach it.

Of my brothers who read these words[289] I ask indulgence for my loose exposition and lack of rigor in demonstration. My only excuse is that I had risen to pinnacles higher than the eye can see, and I wanted to try, at least, to approach them in words so as to excite desire and inspire a passion to start out along this road.

Of God I ask forgiveness, and pray Him to purify our knowledge of Him, for He is bountiful and it is He Who bestows all blessings. Farewell my brother, whom it was my duty to help. The blessings and the mercy of God upon you!

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APPENDIX &c.

1. Though the preceding history, upon the account of the lively image and representation which it gives of unspotted virtue, unfeigned love of God, and contempt of the things of this life, does very well deserve to be read: So, as it contains several things co-incident with the errors of some enthusiasts of these present times, it deserves to be considered. Upon which account, I had no sooner suffered myself to be persuaded to undertake the translation of this book, than I determined to subjoin some reflections upon such part of it as seemed to me most worthy of consideration. Lest otherwise, that book which was by me designed for the innocent, and not altogether unprofitable diversion of the reader, might accidentally prove a means of leading some into error, who are not capable of judging aright; and of confirming others in their mistakes, who through their own weakness, or the prejudice of a bad education, have the misfortune to be led out of the way. And I was the more willing to do it, because there has been a bad use made of this book before.

2. There are a great many errors both in his Philosophy and Divinity: And it was impossible it should be otherwise, the one being altogether Aristotelian, the other Muhammadan. I shall pass over the greatest part of them, as not being likely to do any harm; and confine myself chiefly to the examination of this Fundamental Error of my Author, namely, (*) That God has given such a power or faculty to man, whereby he may, without any external means, attain to the knowledge of all things necessary to Salvation, and even to the Beatific Vision itself, whilst in this (1) state: In doing which I shall still have regard to the errors received concerning these things in the present Age.

3. In order to this I shall examine the ways and means by which the People of God, in all Ages, came to the understanding of His Will. Now it is evident, from the absurd notions which the ancient heathens had of the Deity, and their idolatry, that mankind was so far degenerated and depraved, that they had lost the true knowledge of God, and of His attributes, and consequently were ignorant of their duty towards Him; for which reason God was pleased, out of His infinite love and mercy towards mankind, to send at sundry times PROPHETS; that is, men who were inspired by the HOLY SPIRIT, and had the Will of God **immediately** revealed to them; to the end that they might instruct others how to serve Him (the ancient Tradition received from our First Parents, and those good men which succeeded them, being now almost worn out and over-grown by the increasing wickedness of the world) and thereby avoid those judgments which would otherwise infallibly overtake them, if they continued in impenitence and disobedience [to His Holy Will].

4. This was the means which the Generality of the People of God

(*) Note: See 84, 85, etc.

(1) This state of our life here on earth before death of body.

had to know His Will. They received it from the PROPHETS, who had it **immediately** from God. So that the difference of their knowledge consisted in the manner of their receiving of it, not in the things received, which were the same both to the Prophets and the People. Only the Prophets received it **immediately,** but not the People : for then consequently they would all have been prophets, which it is plain they were not.

5. And when it had pleased God to give a clearer and fuller Revelation of His Will to the prophet Moses ; what was delivered to him was committed to the care of the priests, of whom both king and people were obliged to learn their duty. Deuteronomy, chap. 17, v. 18 : « And it shall be when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this Law in a book, out of that which is before the priests the Levites, and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this Law, and these statutes, to do them ». And in the book of the prophet Malachi, chap. 11, v. 7 : « The priests' lips should preserve knowledge, and they should seek the Law at his Mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts ». So that they were not to seek after any other more perfect manner of worship than what was delivered in that Book, nor to expect that those truths or precepts, which were contained in it, should be revealed to them anew, either by any prophet living in their time, or by Immediate Revelation ; but to draw all their instructions from the aforesaid helps. And accordingly, we never find any of the prophets making any alteration in the Law, or calling the people to a more perfect way of worship. From whence it is plain that they were well assured of its sufficiency, till the MESSIAH, who was to complete it, should come ; and their never bidding the people to look for any other way of teaching than what was to be had from that Book and the mouth of the priests, proves evidently that they knew those means to be sufficient.

6. Thus we have seen which way the generality of the people of God were taught ; let us now examine by what means the prophets attained their faculty of prophesying, and wherein it did consist. Now it is most certain that the faculty of prophesying cannot be attained by any Application or Improvement of our [natural] Abilities whatsoever, but depends wholly and entirely upon the Positive Will of God, who upon important and weighty occasions, in his own due time, and to such persons as seem best in his infinite wisdom, does send such as he is pleased to set apart and qualify for that service, by the Inspiration of His Holy Spirit. Second Epistle of Peter, chap. 1, v. 21 : « For Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man ; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost ». It must not be denied but that a sober, righteous and godly life, a heavenly conversation, and a keeping of ourselves pure both in body and spirit, are excellent means to invite the Holy Spirit to dwell in and abide with us. And this is agreeable to right notions of the Purity of God, and his love of that which is Good, and

abhorrence of that which is Evil: It is confirmed by right Reason, the testimony of ancient Churches, and Holy Scripture itself. But then the question is, How does God dwell in those that are His? Certainly, not so as to make Prophets of them, but to strengthen them in their Holy Resolutions, and enable them to perform such things as tend most to His Glory, and their own Salvation. And upon a due examination, we shall find that this is all which the greatest number by far of godly men ever attained; who notwithstanding must by no means be accused of slothfulness in not approving their talent, nor of being wanting in their endeavors to make the nearest Approaches to God that they were capable of.

7. This will appear further, if we consider that those means which were used by holy persons of Old, in order to the improvement of themselves or others, in the exercise of piety and religion, cannot upon any account be reckoned as means of their becoming prophets. Though Samuel was dedicated to the service of God from his birth, and it pleased God to choose him for a prophet; yet there is no question to be made, but that there were several others so dedicated, which did never prophesy. Though Daniel (1) was heard «from the first day that he did set his heart to understand, and to chasten himself before God», and had an angel sent to him with a revelation, yet cannot that disciplining of himself be in any wise accounted a Cause of that revelation; for if it were, the same method would produce the same effect in another man. And although there were particular advantages in being a member of the College of Prophets; as the Prophet Amos intimates in cha. 7, v. 14, where he says, «I was no prophet, nor a prophet's son» — which must be interpreted The Scholar of a prophet, for the scholars of the prophets are always called Sons of the Prophets in Scripture — yet none of these means were sufficient to help men to the Gift of Prophecy. The pious parents thought it a very good way of improving their children in the fear and love of God, and the knowledge of His Will, to have them brought up under those holy and exemplary men the prophets; and accordingly they waited upon them, went on errands, and did their service; at the same time enjoying the great advantage of their example and discourse. And according to their example, even after Prophesy had ceased among the Jews, the eminent men and chief Doctors of the Law had their scholars and disciples, more or fewer, according to the credit and esteem of the master. So that our Blessed Savior's choosing his twelve disciples, was no new thing among the Jews, but had been practised all along, since those Schools of the Prophets. But never did any one imagine that these means of discipline, or any other, were steps to the attaining the Gift of Prophecy, which always depended, not upon men's acquirements or improvements in that which is good, but upon the Positive Will of God.

8. Now if, as appears from what is already said, God has not afforded to man any means whereby he can attain to the more inferior

(1) Daniel, chap. 10, v. 12.

degree of prophecy, which consists in having only some part of his Will revealed; and that not constantly or habitually, but as occasion serves: How vain and fond is it then for any one to imagine that He has given him a Capacity of enjoying His Presence as He is, and of Seeing (1) all things in Him? Which is as much above the attainments of the greatest prophets as theirs is above the weakest of men. For, if we consider, we shall find that the prophets' business consisted in delivering a particular message to one or more; the contents of which sometimes they received by day (2), which sort of vision is called in Hebrew מחזה machazeh, or מראה mareh, or else by night in a dream, and this sort was called חלום halôm, a dream, or חזיון הלילה hazyon hallayelah, a nocturnal vision. But what is either or both these to the Intuition of the Divine Presence? There is as much difference as there is between a great Courtier and a Favorite who, when he pleases, enjoys the presence of his Prince, and one who is only now and then sent by him on an errand. And yet to such a degree of enthusiasm have some gone, as our Author here in particnlar, and several more of the same strain in those former Ages, and the Quietists and other mystics and enthusiasts in our times, that nothing will down with him less than the Intuition of the Divine Being, and they despise Meditation (3) as a mean thing, and too much below one that aspires to Perfection. And this, it seems, is attainable by application and continued exercise; whereby they have at once set all mankind in a capacity of out-doing infinitely the ancient prophets who, if they had known anything of this way, would certainly not have been so sparing of it in their Writings, especially when their business was to labor for the benefit and instruction of mankind. But there is not one word in all their writings which favors this opinion, from whence we may safely conclude that they had no such notion; and yet it must not be in the least doubted but that they were thoroughly acquainted with the Will of God, and knew more of His secret counsel than any other men in the world whatsoever.

9. It must needs be acknowledged by us Christians, as well as by the Jews, that Moses was without controversy the greatest prophet that ever appeared upon earth before our Savior's time, and had the most frequent and greatest revelations of the Divine Will. For although it was a singular favor which God vouchsafed the other prophets, in communicating to them some of the secrets of His purposes; yet Moses was the man whom God chose to be the instrument of the deliverance of His people Israel, by such convincing signs and wonders as were undeniable evidences of the Divine Power by which they were wrought, and who was not only to be God's messenger to His people in some few particulars, but the immediate receiver of that Law and all the Economy, both ecclesiastical and civil, by which God's people were to be governed, without any addition or diminution, so many hundred years, till the

(1) See sections 90 etc. (2) Maimonides in Pocockii Porta Mosis, p. 171. (3) See the Letter concerning the Quietists, printed with the B. of Sarum's Letters,

Coming of the promised MESSIAH. God Himself bears witness to this, in the Book of Numbers chap. 12, v. 6 : « If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make Myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine House. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches, and the Similitude of the Lord shall he behold ». Now Moses had not been faithful in God's House, if he had not revealed the whole Will of God to His people, as it was delivered to him ; which most certainly he did. But how? Why, he commands the people thus : Deuteronomy chap. 6, v. 17 : « You shall diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God, and His testimonies and His statutes which He hath commanded thee » ; which were no doubt the very same which he had received upon Mount Sinai. Nor did this holy man, this « faithful servant in God's House », ever recommend or so much as hint any such service of God as is dreamed of by our Mystics, or give the least encouragement for any to hope for the the Gift of Prophecy, or an Intuition or Beholding the Divine Being in this state [of our life this side the grave]. And yet it is certain that both Moses himself, and multitudes of others after him, were heavenly-minded men, and did that which was acceptable in the sight of God, and shall be partakers of Everlasting Glory.

10. Nor did any of the prophets which came after him ever advance any such refined way of worship ; but constantly blamed the people for not observing the law of Moses, and neglecting the statutes and ordinances which he had left them. And the sum of their prophecies consists either in Exhorting, Reproving, Promising, or Threatening, and some Hints of the MESSIAH. But not one syllable concerning any such abstracted worship, nor any mention made of men's attaining the Beatific Vision. Notwithstanding which, there have been, and still are, many deluded souls who imagine that the warm conceptions of distempered brains are a great measure of that Holy Spirit by which the old prophets spake ; and pretend to such a familiarity and intimate conversation with God ; to such an entire communication and intercourse, that they might, if what they said were true, seem to be glorified spirits, rather than prophets subject to the like infirmities with other men ; and to have left the Church Militant to take their place in the Triumphant. Not considering that all this is only a pleasing sort of an amusement, a fool's paradise, and grounded upon no better reason or foundation than the man that was distracted had to fancy himself an emperor, and all that came about him his subjects. These men do not consider that we live in such an Age of the world as we are not to expect such extraordinary Effusions of the Spirit : All that we can reasonably expect, or that God has promised, is to give His Holy Spirit to those that ask it of Him ; that is, so to guide them by His gracious assistance as that they may overcome their spiritual enemies, and be crowned hereafter with glory and immortality ; which certainly ought to content any reasonable man, without aspiring to Immediate Revelation, Prophecy, obtaining the Vision of God, and such like things,

which God has denied to us whilst in this state [of life before death].

11, Indeed, if it were in Religion, as in Arts and Sciences, it might with much more reason have been expected, that considering the vast distance of time since the first planting of the Christian Religion to this present Age, we might have been improved to a Degree of Prophecy. For Arts and Sciences receive their beginnings from very small hints at first, and are afterwards improved proportionably to the industry and capacity of those who cultivate them; and therefore we may reasonably expect that the longer they continue, the more they will be advanced. But the case is vastly different in Religion, which is always best and purest at its first setting out. And there is a very good reason to be given why it should be so; for after the first Covenant made by God with mankind in the person of Adam, every other Dispensation has found men under a state of corruption, and in the actual profession of errors diametrically opposite to those truths which it came to instruct them in; and therefore it was requisite that the means to remove these at first should bear proportion with the difficulties they were to encounter. Upon which account, at the beginning of any new Dispensation, those persons whom God was pleased to employ to publish it to mankind, have been endued with more zeal and greater abilities than the professors of the same religion in after Ages. And as no person can doubt but that the Jewish religion was much more perfect in the days of Moses, and those which immediately succeeded him, than in after times, when it was obscured and mudded by Pharisaical inventions and traditions: So must it also be confessed that the Christian religion was much more perfect in the days of the Apostles, and the ages immediately succeeding them, than since it has been obscured by the interest of the designing on the one hand, and the prejudice and ignorance of the Unlearned on the other. And this is what is plainly confessed by the practice of most contending Parties amongst the professors of Christianity; who constantly make their appeals to the earliest Writers of the Primitive Christian Church, and use all means to bring them over to their own side; which is an evident concession that they value their authority, and look upon them as the most competent judges of their controversies. Now, if I shall make it appear that there was no such thing as is contended for by our enthusiasts, in those early times, when the Holy Spirit must be confessed on all hands to be more plentifully poured out than in the succeeding Ages; I hope it will appear evidently to any unprejudiced person that it is not at all to be expected under the Christian Dispensation.

12. To begin therefore with our Blessed Savior himself. It is evident that he never recommended any such way of worshipping God as is contended for by the Mystics, nor promised to reward the most sincere of his followers with the Vision of God whilst in this state (of sinfulness). As for his own life, which is certainly the most perfect pattern, it was Active to the greatest degree; and bating some times of retirement, to pray or the like, was wholly spent in conversation and doing good to

others. Then as to the substance of his doctrine, it consisted in acquainting the Jews that he himself was the MESSIAH, whose Coming was so long ago, and so often foretold by the ancient prophets. He also acquainted them with the nature of his office and mediatorship, and showed them how mightily they were mistaken in their interpretations of the prophets concerning him. He let them know that, contrary to their expectation, his kingdom was not of this world; but that his business was to bring men out of darkness to light, and from the bondage and slavery of sin, to the liberty of the sons of God. He taught them to abandon all ungodly lusts, and to set their hearts upon things above; assuring them that, if they continued in his love, they should be rewarded with everlasting happiness. And lest his Disciples, and those Churches which should be planted by their ministry, should be destitute of necessary encouragement and help, he assures them, in most endearing terms, of his love towards and care over them, and promises speedily to send them the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth (John's Gospel, chapters 13 to 18) which should not only assure them of his own and the Father's love towards them, but also enable them to work such miracles as should be sufficient to confirm the truth of their mission. But nowhere promises the enjoyment of the Beatific Vision here; but bids them to expect their reward hereafter; assuring them that «whither he went they could not follow him now, but should follow him afterwards»; and that «he went to prepare a place for them». Nor did he even mention his having purchased for mankind such a privilege as that they might, by diligently improving what was given them, come to God without any other means, but rather quite the contrary: for he says, John's Gospel ch. 14, v. 7, and Epistle to the Romans ch. 10, v. 17, 18: «No man cometh to the Father but by me». Now certainly the way to come to Christ is to believe in him; which, according to the Apostle Saint Paul, presupposes hearing him preached.

13. And as our Blessed Saviour did never promise to reward the endeavors of sincere persons with such a power whereby they might attain, without any External Means, all things necessary to salvation, much less the Intuition or Beholding the Divine Presence whilst in this life; so neither do we find that they either expected or enjoyed it. The method of God in teaching his people was still the same as it ever had been, **viz.** by revealing His will to some few, in order to having it communicated by their ministry to others. And I desire any one that thinks otherwise to produce me one single instance of any person that came to the true knowledge of God and the necessary means of salvation, but by this way. The contrary is evident from the example of the Eunuch, Apostles' Acts ch. 8, who was a devout person and well disposed; and we find his zeal and sincerity rewarded by God's sending to him a proper person to instruct him.

14. Which is still further confirmed by the example of Cornelius, Acts ch. 10, who being «a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, and gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always», was so far accepted by God that He was graciously pleased to

provide means for his further instruction in his duty, and sent Peter to instruct him. Whereby He has plainly pointed out to us the way by which He would have us seek for the knowledge of Him, to wit, by applying ourselves to such as He has appointed to teach His people. Accordingly we find that Cornelius's alms and devotions, and incessant waiting upon God, did neither advance him to the Beatific Vision, nor so far as to have those truths presented to him by way of object, **immediately,** which were necessary to be believed by him in order to his salvation; neither is he at all encouraged to look for or depend upon Vision or Intuition, but is sent to a man like himself, to hear with his outward ears those things which concerned his Eternal Welfare. Whereas, if God had ever granted to mankind a power whereby he might, by due application and attention, attain to a sufficient knowledge of God and things necessary to salvation; or, if such a privilege, though witheld and denied before, had been purchased for men by Jesus Christ; there is no question but persons so extraordinarily well qualified as these two good men, Cornelius and the Eunuch, were, would have enjoyed the benefit of it; and then the event would have been that, by their constant attending upon God and their unwearied diligence in meditating and practising good things, they would have increased in spiritual knowledge, and made nearer approaches to God, till they had attained to Perfection. But we find nothing like this, but that on the contrary they were obliged to be instructed by the same means which God had appointed for other men.

15. And then as to matter of Vision, the whole tenor of the Apostles' doctrine runs counter to it. Saint Paul tells us that all those noble actions which were performed by the Ancient Worthies (Epistle to the Hebrews chap. 11) were done through Faith; which, as he himself defines it in verse 1, is «The Substance of things hoped for, the Evidence of things not seen» It is an assent which we give to things as true which we can neither apprehend by our senses, nor demonstrate by our reasoning; so that the only objects of our faith are such things as we receive upon the credit of another; which how far it is from Vision, is evident to common sense. And the same Apostle tells us that «now we see through a glass darkly»; and that «we know in part, and prophecy in part»; — see Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. 13, verses 12 and 9.

16. Hence it is plain that all those texts which speak of the plentiful effusion of the Spirit in the times of the Gospel, are quite misunderstood by all those who interpret them after such a manner as if God had given such a measure of it to all mankind that, upon a due improvement of it, they might attain to the knowledge of Him and of all things necessary to salvation. Whereas it appears that, even in the earliest times of the Gospel, there was no such thing; but then all the Churches were planted by the ministry of the Apostles, who ordained others to succeed them in their office. If therefore in those times it was not granted, it is a ridiculous absurdity to expect it in this Age; and no small degree either of impudence or madness to pretend to it.

17. Since it is not foreign to the matter in hand, the Reader will,

I hope, pardon me if I digress a little, to show why we cannot reasonably expect prophets now. It seems to me that there are several reasons to be given why there should be prophets during the time of the Mosaic Dispensation rather than after the Gospel had taken root. For, the promises made to the Jews having relation to their possessing the Land of Canaan, God was pleased to send to them prophets to quicken their memories, and keep them in mind of their duty, that thereby His judgments might be averted from them; (and especially, because of the prevailing idolatry of those times; for after they were well fixed in the practice of the true religion, and out of that danger, we find no prophets); and we find that most of the ancient prophecies tend that way. But now we are quite upon another bottom; we are taught that «we have here no continuing city»; that «when these tabernacles shall be dissolved, we have a habitation not made with hands, eternal in the heavens». That we are to «set our minds on things above, not on things on the Earth»; that we are to «deny ourselves, and take up our cross and follow Christ»; that «through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of heaven», and many passages to the same effect. So that to have prophets foretelling future events, relating to the welfare and preservation of our temporals, or the contrary, seems not so proper for a people whose very profession supposes them to have laid aside all solicitude concerning them. Again, before the Coming of Christ, God's will was but imperfectly revealed; and it was necessary that there should be fore-runners to prepare the way against His Coming, and raise or awaken the expectation of him in the people, that they might be better prepared to receive him. But after He was once come who was to complete and fulfil all; after «God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, had in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, etc., who was the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person», etc.,— I say, after God had, by this Glorious Person, manifested and revealed His Whole Will to us, and declared whatsoever He required to be believed and done by us whilst in these Mortal Bodies; there was no longer need of Revelation to those who had received the most perfect one that could be delivered. So that all those reasons being removed, which were to be given for a succession of immediately-inspired prophets before the coming of Christ; it is altogether groundless, to say no worse of it, to expect any now that he has come. What methods God will hereafter use, when His time is come, to bring in the Fulness of the Gentiles, and to convert the Jews; or what endowments He will bestow upon those persons whom He shall please to make use of as His instruments to complete that great work, will then be best known when it is come to pass. There is no question but that He will use sufficient means. All that I here contend for is, that those means which He has already afforded are abundantly sufficient for those who have the happiness to be baptized and brought up in the profession of the Christian Faith; and consequently that it is unreasonable to expect any other helps, or to seek any other

means of serving God than what are delivered in His Holy Word, and made use of in His Church.

18. To return to our argument. If these things, contended for by enthusiasts, were not granted either under the Jewish or Christian Dispensation, as I hope has been sufficiently proved ; it follows, **à majori,** that those who are deprived of those advantages, which both Jews and Christians enjoyed, cannot have them : And therefore in vain do we search for persons so endowed amongst Muslims or Heathens. For, without any breach of charity in respect to those persons who never were so happy as to have the Gospel preached to them; we may assure ourselves that they do not enjoy equal privileges with us, who by our baptism have a federal right to all those helps of the Holy Spirit promised to the Church in the Holy. Scriptures. And yet there would not be much difference if, by their diligently adhering to any principle or light which God has bestowed upon mankind in general, they might attain to true saving knowledge. And for this reason, our Author who was himself a Muslim seems as little to have consulted the honor of his Prophet Muhammad, and the necessity of believing his doctrine, in feigning a person, brought up by himself, to have by his unaided application and industry attained to the knowledge of all things revealed to that Arabian prophet, as our enthusiasts do value the means (1) which God has always used to convey His Will to mankind. Whilst out of a groundless charity they do in a manner put all men upon the same level as to the means of salvation. Which opinion of theirs, however plausible at first sight, upon account of that specious show of Universal Charity to mankind, does most certainly tend to the undervaluing and lessening of those inestimable benefits which our Blessed Savior has purchased for, and promised to his Church ; and ought no more to be received than that charitable opinion of the early church doctor (teacher) Origen who believed that after a certain time of punishment not only the wickedest of men but also the devils themselves should be saved.

19. I have now shown that what is here held by our Author, and by too many others in our own times, has no manner of foundation. That it was never promised nor expected, either under the Mosaic or Christian Dispensation ; from whence I have inferred that it cannot be expected anywhere else, and consequently that there is no such thing at all. If I have not spoken all the while particularly to my Author, the reason is because I write to Christians, and have chiefly regard to those errors, held by some of that Denomination, which are common with those of our Author. Besides, if that were requisite, it is only allowing for argument's sake that the Qurân was written by inspiration, and that Muhammad was a prophet, and then the same way of arguing proves the enthusiasm of our Author who, being a professed Muslim, and they being obliged to believe that Muhammad is the « Khâtimatu-l-anbiyâ », i. e., The Seal of the Prophets, and that theirs is the last Dispensation which mankind shall ever receive from God, has ventured to suppose the

(1) See section 109.

possibility of a man's attaining to the true knowledge of God, and things necessary to salvation, and all other things both spiritual and natural belonging either to this world or that to come, without the Help of any Outward Instruction.

20. I need not insist upon this any longer; I shall only remark that as true Piety is the same in all ages and climates, and good solid sense too, so is also Enthusiasm. And I have sometimes wondered, when I have read the whimsies and conceits of the Arab enthusiasts (whose numerous sects equal those heresies mentioned by Epiphanius (1), or even that plentiful crop which the Devil has sowed of them in our times) to find such a harmony between them and ours at present. Such a perfect agreement in their wild notions, and these expressed in the very self-same Cant, may easily convince any one that the instruments of both were strung and tuned by the same hand. Another thing observable is this: Let the Enthusiast have never such great abilities, there is always something or other which proves his pretensions to Revelation to be false; and as they tell us that, let the Devil change himself into what shape he will, he can never conceal his Cloven Foot, so neither can the Enthusiast make himself pass for Inspired, with any person of tolerable discerning; but there will appear some very considerable flaw which shall manifestly prove him to be a deceiver, or at least a person deceived. This is the fate of them; and our Author could not avoid it. He has indeed carried his Philosopher beyond the Orb of Saturn (section 90); but he might as well have saved him that trouble; for he brought nothing down with him but what he himself was able to furnish him withal before he went, namely Muslim Divinity, and Aristotelian Philosophy. As to the former of these, I shall not need to say anything; but I am well assured that when he talked of those discoveries in the latter, made by him when he was in that glorious state, he never dreamed in the least of those more certain discoveries which should be made afterwards by the sagacity of our astronomers and philosophers; and that the contrary of what he believed, as to those things, should be proved by undeniable demonstration.

21. Nor does it succeed better with such pretenders in our Age; who, taught by woful experience, have of late grown more wary, and have rarely pretended to inspirations, except in such matters as they might be well assured of by other means. The safest way for them, I confess, though at the same time extremely absurd and ridiculous. For, if a man pretends to know a thing by divine inspiration, when there are other means of attaining it: I have much more reason to think, either that he is an impostor and deceiver, or else that, through warmth of conceit or the delusion of the Devil, he imagines himself to be divinely inspired when he is not; rather than to believe that God, who does nothing but for most wise and excellent ends and purposes should reveal

(1) A Greek ecclesiastical writer, born in Palestine of Jewish parents, and brought up by Egyptian monks; Bishop in Cyprus, died 403 A. D.

a thing to any person **immediately**, when He had before afforded him sufficient means of knowing it otherwise.

22. It remains that we beg of God to give us His Grace, and the assistance of His Holy Spirit, that we may sincerely and heartily apply ourselves to the diligent use of those means which He has appointed for our instruction, in His Church; that we seek for the knowledge of Him in His Holy Word, and **approach** to Him in His ordinances, and by a holy pious conversation. These are the ways which He has chalked out for us; and if any persons will not be content with these means, but will walk in by-paths, and follow every **ignis fatuus** that presents itself; if they be at the last convinced of their fatal mistake when it is too late, they must blame themselves. God of His infinite mercy lead them out of their errors, and guide both them and us through this imperfect state, till at last we attain to the Perfect Vision and Full Enjoyment of Himself, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord. — AMEN.

THE END.

PLEASURES OF PIETY

A Deity believed, is joy begun;
A Deity ador'd, is joy advanc'd;
A Deity belov'd, is joy matur'd.
Each branch of piety delight inspires:
Faith builds a bridge from this world to the next
O'er death's dark gulf, and all its horror hides;
Praise, the sweet exhalation of our joy,
That joy exalts, and makes it sweeter still;
Pray'r ardent opens heav'n, lets down a stream
Of glory on the consecrated hour
Of man in audience with the Deity.